

# CHRISTIAN COURIER

*A Reformed Biweekly*

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## 6,600 Calgary children go hungry every day

Stephen VanHelden

CALGARY, Alta. — In one of the most prosperous cities in Canada about 6,600 children are going hungry every day. Child hunger problems in Calgary were cited in a 16-page report called "Feed the Children," which was released in April by local aid agencies and the city's social development department.

The report was ordered last year by Mayor Al Duerr and written by a committee comprised of members from various social, volunteer, education and health agencies.

Lisa Brakel is one of the people on the committee who works for Food And Nutrition in School



Lisa Brakel, of Food And Nutrition in School, checks this month's supplies.

(FANS), the city's main feeding program for children. She says the report confirmed what many already knew. "We feed so many hungry kids a year. This is a formal way of documenting that the numbers are accurate and that, yes, we have more work to do in the city." In the 1997-98 school year alone, statistics compiled by FANS showed they provided 85,000 servings to hungry children in Calgary and Airdre or 2,100 servings per week.

While some politicians including Premier Ralph Klein have questioned the accuracy of the numbers, Brakel says they are average. "They fall in line with Canada's numbers on one-in-five

children living in poverty," she said. The estimates in the report are based on the number of children living in homes where the main source of income comes from social assistance. The report also says 9,500 children experience hunger on an intermittent basis, and an alarming 28,889 live in homes where the income is below the poverty line resulting in nutrition deficiencies.

### High rent

"I think it's appalling in our rich country that kids are going hungry," says Ann O'Donnell of the Interfaith Food Bank in Calgary. "Unfortunately, I wasn't that  
See CALGARY'S page 2...

## United Church has strayed, says Bermuda Court

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO — Methodists in Bermuda won a court case recently in which they called for their congregation's independence from the United Church of Canada (UCC) and accused the denomination of straying from its Methodist roots. The outcome surprised some observers because the judge focused on the theology of the Methodist and United churches more than on property rights.

The case has sparked an ongoing debate in Canada between those who defend the UCC and its current theological liberalism, and those who would like to see the denomination return to the doctrines promoted by John Wesley.

Although the case was heard by Bermuda's Supreme Court, Dr. Victor Shepherd, an expert witness at the case, asserts "there's enormous precedent with respect to what is the United Church [of Canada]. There's no precedent with

respect to real estate but with respect to doctrine." Shepherd, an expert on the writings of John Wesley, is chair of Wesley Studies at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto. He is also an ordained UCC minister and a member of that church's Community of Concern (a theologically conservative group which seeks to preserve the UCC's historic Christian beliefs).

The Bermuda court case was held in March 1998, but the decision is in the process of being appealed by the Synod of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bermuda (which is a presbytery of UCC's Maritime Conference). In the court case, two opposing groups were competing for control of Grace Methodist Church in Bermuda. One was the Bermuda Synod, which argued that the church should remain part of it and the UCC. The opposing group was a faction of the church's

See BERMUDA page 2...



Grace Methodist Church in Bermuda: struggling to stay close to its roots.

CRC Synod '99 met in  
Canada

See coverage on pp. 11-15



Synod delegates and visitors mingled and munched.

Two unique summer stories:  
"For whoever..." and "Flight"  
..... p. 10 and 16



## News

# Calgary's high rents, low wages cause hunger

... continued from page 1

surprised by the report. I see 80-85 kids on a daily basis that are hungry." O'Donnell pegged high rents in Calgary and a low minimum wage as part of the problem. "Many of the families that are working, are working for minimum wage and they are paying ridiculous amounts for rent," she says. O'Donnell cited information which shows that Calgarians are often paying double the amount of rent such as \$800 for a two-bedroom apartment while Edmontonians would pay about \$400 for the same.

The high number of children going hungry also doesn't surprise Bonnie Bailey, co-ordinator of Family Resources for Calgary Urban Project Society. "People are struggling to put a roof over their head and food in their stomach," she says. She explains that when families are paying at least \$500 or \$600 for rent, there isn't much left for food. "There can also be other things to buy like formula and diapers. When there is \$144 left, (from a social assistance cheque) that's not enough."

This is how Barb, an elementary school teacher in Calgary,

describes one situation: "Arriving late, P., a slender 8 year-old, slips into the classroom trying not to be noticed. She is sucking on her hand and looks frightened. At recess, P. sneaks as much food as she can from the snack box. She eats as quickly as she can in the hallway and stuffs the leftovers in her pockets. All day she seems tired and inattentive and cannot recall the lessons taught" (from: "Feed the Children").

## Two-pronged attack

Brakel says that the FANS program will probably "expand into

different types of programs, not just in schools but before school care, after school care, different community initiatives and programs that run during the Christmas and summer holidays, that type of thing."

Brakel believes there should be a two-pronged approach. "We have to deal with immediate hunger but also with the future and how we can alleviate child hunger. I think the next step is to focus on whether it is community kitchens or other methods of educating parents."

While the child hunger

statistics are startling, Brakel is encouraged by the positive response from the community, especially since the report was released. "Sometimes you never know. Sometimes, it may have been a very negative response that nobody wants to deal with the issue or even recognize that it exists. But we haven't had that. We have had a lot of support from the community," she says. She explains that various corporations, individuals and agencies like the United Way have been very supportive and donations to FANS have increased.

# Bermuda Methodists stay true to Wesley

... continued from page 1

congregation, led by Gwynneth and Willard Lightbourne, who argued that they truly represented the original aims of the church, which focused on following the teachings of John Wesley.

## For no other purpose

In her judgment of the case, Bermudan Supreme Court Judge Norma Wade-Miller came down on the side of the breakaway group. She pointed out that they "seek to worship in adherence to the doctrine of the late Rev. John Wesley."

The church faction argued that the original church property deeds were "conveyed to the Wesleyan Trustees of Pembroke Parish, their successors and assignees, to be held substantially upon similar trust to build a suitable building upon the land 'to be used for the celebration' therein of the worship of Almighty God, for the holding of Sabbath school and for other religious and moral purposes, in accordance with the doctrine, rules and usages of the Methodist Church and for no other use, intent or purpose."

The group also declared that "the United Church of Canada today does not embody nor provide for maintaining intact the whole principles which were fundamental to the Methodist tradition and the 25 Articles Of Faith of the late Reverend John Wesley. The Defendant [the Bermuda Synod] possesses no right, title or interest in any part of the property in question." The faction asserted that "the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bermuda had no power to continue a link with the United Church of Canada once the United Church of Canada adopted a policy to ordain as priests declared homosexuals and lesbians." Judge



Dr. Victor Shepherd

Wade-Miller agreed on these points.

## Competing hymns

The split at Grace Church led to very disruptive church services late last year, reported Wade-Miller. The Bermuda Synod appointed a new church minister, but the previous minister refused to give up control of the congregation. And so it was reported, for example, that "on 7th July 1998 the first Sunday after the Synod's purported assumption of responsibility Synod attempted to conduct a service which turned out to be most contentious. Both groups sought to exercise possession." Reverend Victor MacLeod, the new minister, told the court, "I proceeded to attempt to conduct the service with disruptions from Mr. Lightbourne. We proceeded to carry the service out. We announced one hymn, Mr. Lightbourne called another and the organist being the louder was disruptive. We gave communion but it was a disruptive service. Subsequently synod changed the locks to the church.... In response, the congregation changed the lock and retook possession and thereafter remain in possession worship-

ping every Sunday up to the present time."

## Issue still alive

In her conclusion, the judge wrote: "The fundamental question to be determined by the court is what is the underlying trust purpose on which the property is held. The next question then is what is meant by the word 'Methodist Church?' The opinion of Dr. Victor Shepherd, the only expert called in the case, is clear and compelling." She accepted Shepherd's definition of the Methodist Church, based on the "25 Articles of the Methodist Church" written by John Wesley.

In his testimony, Shepherd had accused the UCC of contravening Wesley's articles "in its articulation of its formal theology and its fostering of its day-to-day operative theology.... Such infringement has occurred not once but many times, and not wilfully or inadvertently" but intentionally. For instance, he contended, "The documents on sexuality cannot be reconciled and would be rejected outright by Wesley. The new creed and the amendments to the hymnbook *Voices United* are non-Methodist."

Commenting recently on the court case, Shepherd said, "This is a year old, but it's very live.... It's as recent as tomorrow." He explains that the dissident members of Grace Methodist Church are now worshipping independently of the UCC.

Shepherd asserts that if John Wesley were to observe the UCC today, "he would describe it as having departed an indescribable amount" from original Methodist doctrines, and would call it "a little sect."

Several months ago, Shepherd told the *United Church Observer*,



Rev. Peter Wyatt

"A Supreme Court judge within the British Commonwealth has pronounced the United Church to be wholly at odds with its own doctrinal basis. This I think has momentous significance. If a church is defined by its doctrine, are we a church?"

But while the principles that underlie the Bermuda case may have some application in Canadian court cases dealing with similar property situations, the Bermuda decision would likely have only "persuasive value" in Canada, according to United Church staff lawyer Cynthia Gunn.

According to Rev. Peter Wyatt, UCC general secretary for theology and faith, the judge in the Bermuda case accepted the "assumption that fidelity to Methodism is constituted by a strict reiteration of Wesleyan statement of the late 18th century." While Shepherd said Wesley "abhorred novelty or change," and would have opposed United Church statements and policies around sexuality, Wyatt says Wesley never spoke directly on questions of the ordination of self-declared homosexuals, states the *Observer*.

Ian Hunter, professor emeritus of law at the University of Western

Ontario, wrote a column in early June in the *National Post*, in which he defended the Bermuda court's decision and commended Shepherd for his testimony.

In response to Hunter's column, Wyatt wrote a piece in the *National Post* criticizing Hunter for taking "upon himself the dubious ecumenical vocation of correcting the United Church.... He is simply recycling the point of view of United Church dissidents."

## Wesley final judge?

Criticizing Shepherd for his testimony at the trial, Wyatt questioned why Shepherd focused only on the writings of Wesley as the basis for the Methodist Church, and why the judge agreed with Shepherd. "The question is whether to be Methodist is only to reiterate John Wesley.... With all due respect to this indefatigable evangelist and social reformer, I do not believe the Methodist churches of either the U.S. or Britain would agree ... any more than does the UCC."

Instead, says Wyatt, "The UCC has a 75-year history of which the Methodist Church is only a part." Although he admits that some United Church members feel the church has strayed from Wesley's teachings, he asserts, "I think there are many who'd say we're in close continuity" with Wesley.

Wyatt contends that: "A decision made by a Bermuda court on the basis of an idiosyncratic deed hardly establishes any Canadian precedent because the United Church holds its property according to the clear provisions of an act of the Parliament of Canada." He points out that since 1988, Canadian courts have upheld that UCC churches are not owned locally but by the denomination.



## News/Environment

# Kairos comes to Canada

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — After 15 years of effective Christian prison ministry in the U.S., Kairos is expanding its work into Canada. In late April, Kairos held its first major event at a Canadian prison.

Keith Vrieswyk, the chairperson of Kairos Canada, has spearheaded Kairos's expansion into Canada. "I've personally worked about 10 years in prisons south of the border," says Vrieswyk, whose wife, Bonnie, has also volunteered with Kairos for more than 10 years.

He calls his work with Kairos "a labor of love," since it is a busy but rewarding volunteer task for

him. In his day-job, Vrieswyk is vice-principal of Lakeport Secondary School in St. Catharines, Ont.

Canadian volunteers have been active with Kairos for years, often crossing the American border to visit male or female prison inmates. But this spring (April 29 to May 3) marked the first time Kairos held one of its trademark weekend events at a Canadian prison: Fenbrook Medium Security Correctional Facility near Bracebridge, Ont.

Kairos is an interdenominational Christian ministry to men's and women's prisons. The name "Kairos" is a Greek word for

"time," used to mean the sense of a time set by God for a particular occurrence, according to the Kairos leaders' manual.

The group's main purpose is "the Christianization" of prisons through "small prayer and share groups of the residents [and] the example of their transformation, their silent witness and their Christian love," states the manual.

The main focus of Kairos' work is three-day weekends, during which volunteers visit a prison and offer a short course in Christianity to selected inmates, who Kairos refers to as "candidates."

Kairos's three-day weekend events involve significant work

and "a great deal" of advance preparation, asserts Vrieswyk.

As co-ordinator for the first weekend at Fenbrook, Vrieswyk corresponded with the prison's management and met with Fenbrook's chaplains to make all necessary arrangements.

After that, 17 preparatory meetings were held with Kairos volunteers. The reason why so much preparation is needed, explains Vrieswyk, is "we need to prepare spiritually in terms of bonding together as a team." Since Kairos volunteers come from different denominations, having a good team spirit helps them to present a "united face of Christ," so that "petty differences" don't cause problems, says Vrieswyk.

Vrieswyk was also "advising rector" for the weekend — assisting the weekend's rector Don Healy. Vrieswyk's role, in this case, was to "give advice, support and encouragement to the rector."

The first weekend event at Fenbrook received an outstanding



Keith Vrieswyk

response from inmates, asserts Vrieswyk. He says Kairos will hold a second weekend event at Fenbrook this coming October. "We are prayerfully exploring the possibility of opening other prisons" to Kairos's work, he reports.

Kairos now works in 23 states, and has expanded its work recently into Australia, England and South Africa. The Vrieswyks are members of Jubilee Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in St. Catharines.

## A whale of a way to die

Whales have been big in the news the past few weeks. Dramatic things have happened — from a cruise ship colliding with a fin whale in Vancouver to the Makah tribe killing a grey whale on the Olympic coast. What is it about the death of these great animals that rivets our attention? Is it their size, the media hype, or Walt Disney cartoon caricatures that shape our reaction?

All of these factors help get our attention. But I think that it is the mystery of death in relation to animate creatures that grips us most. We are bound up in life with animals. We are sustained daily by the death of animals (and plants, fungi and bacteria too!). None of us can escape the fact that our lives are enmeshed with those of the animals; and that is our dilemma. To live, we must — or at least, we do — inflict pain and death.

Few of us worry much over the pain we might give insects. When we move from wasps to whales however, the problem of pain and suffering intrudes, and should. What do we make of pain in the many species that vocalize, play, and learn complex behaviors? Some people emphasize our differences from these animals. "It is not the same kind of pain or death."

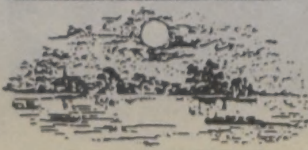
They rightly note that Scripture locates our difference from animals in the fact that we are made "in the image of God." So they simply try to put as much distance as possible between animals and us. But this tactic doesn't solve the problem. We still wonder: what are animals here for, and why, even apart from our inflicting it, do they suffer pain?

### Listening to the beasts

Is there something we can learn from animal death? Can we move beyond the options of sentimentality or brutal callousness? Scripture speaks indirectly to the question of pain in animals. So there is room here to differ, and Christians do.

One view I like goes like this: Nature can help us learn to uncover God's purposes as Creator when we see his creation unfolding in his work as Redeemer. Scripture tells us that pain, suffering

### Creation waits...



John Wood

and death make sense only in the light of the New Creation. We live in hope, and our hope has been validated. This future hope has already broken through into the present. The Redeemer has overcome death.

Now how can that help us with the Makah case?

### The conservationist as killer

The whale killing by the Makah tribe brought this dilemma onto the public agenda. Some people want a complete ban on hunting whales — they are sentient creatures. They say No to all whaling, fearing that a breach in the ban for native purposes will signal a return to full-scale whaling.

For their part, the Makah have made a compelling case for resuming the hunt. Without a whale hunt their culture will die. So which will it be? Shall we conserve a culture or conserve whales? Is it either-or? Should we "just say No" to these native people? Then what do we say to ourselves? The Makah may have a healthier view of animals than our death-denying culture does.

We tend to focus only on endangered species. But what of the rest? Consider recent advertisements for fast-food chicken, or all you can eat shrimp or lobster. Do we value these animals as God's creatures? Or do we simply see them as "materials" to be "consumed" in any way we wish?

In death these creatures challenge us to live stewardly, redemptive lives. I sometimes think that this is what the animals are here for. To remind us to live better in and with creation than we have so far.

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College in Edmonton, Alta.

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## Editorial

# I've gone about as far as I can go

*Letters from a senior to a junior editor (10)*

## My Dearest Wordgood:

This is my last letter to you. You will be taking over later this year after an interim period. I have found my part of the correspondence a real challenge. It's not easy to speak about a changing world when part of me is in the older world and part of me is in your world. I do realize that sometimes I am somewhat halfheartedly in your world. This point was driven home to me recently when a younger reader told me that she was not interested in my questions and was not looking forward to having *her* questions answered by me, either.

There is a divide between those of us who know another reality and those who don't. Someone pointed out to me that I'm a point 5 Canadian. Meaning, I'm not a first generation Canadian like my children, and I'm not an immigrant who decided on his own to come to Canada, like my mother. I'm somewhere in between. As a 0.5 Canadian, I had my high school education in the Netherlands and my university education in North America. But more importantly, I grew up before television and computers had taken their hold on children's minds. I knew a world in which technology was not the god it is today.

## The new gods

"Technology," says Tom Darby, a Canadian political philosopher, "expresses modern man's innermost self-understanding: his desire to overcome nature, including human nature, and transform the world to suit his will" (*The Ottawa Citizen*, March 9, 1997). Whether we like it or not, our vast systems of interaction – economic, political, commercial, educational, social, recreational – give us certain freedoms, but at the same time take freedom away by making us dependent. The resulting globalization of the world, which some may call the Westernization or Americanization of all peoples, makes it very difficult to apply our personal integrity or to experience ourselves as unique.

I also grew up in a world in which consumerism was an unknown concept. Society was not organized according to market-driven demands. Loyalty to workers and to clients and vice versa was still a well understood value. Mass production was limited. Governments were elected according to philosophical and religious principles, not according to economic performance. (How come the New Brunswick electorate can switch loyalty so easily from provincial Liberal to Conservative unless principles don't matter?)

At the same time, the new society has bred a deep longing for community and wholeness. Churches do their best outreach when they back up their sound preaching with good fellowship. People want very much to belong and to be accepted. Sermons that get the best response today are sermons that stress the amazing grace of God and the reality of painful alienation and abuse. People want to be loved, not scolded. A few stalwarts like myself are still turned on by sermons about the beauty of God's law. I believe that this newer emphasis shows that people are either hurting more because of dislocation, or are more aware of their hurts.

## It's about human desires

With respect to all these things, Dear Wordgood, there's not much we as Christians can do to change reality as our society perceives it to be. And I don't want to lament this, either. Somehow I believe that all of it is headed for a greater purpose, something that God can use, even though we may abuse it.

The wrong use of technology is, of course, determined by our human impulses for good or bad. And God will judge us for that, and make us pay for that already in this world. But there is something good about the way we discover new cures and new opportunities for communication.

Technology itself is, strictly speaking, the result of the opening up of creation. Computers are marvellous inventions, or should I say, discoveries.

Where we go wrong is when we allow these things

to become gods, to over-rule us. When the basic love command, which begins with love for God and continues in love for self, neighbor and the rest of creation, is subjected to the demands of an economic enterprise or empire, then the fox virus is in the chicken coop computer. (If there is oil and gas off the Queen Charlottes, do you for a moment think that it will not be developed. Haida or no Haida, ecology or no ecology?)



## The brave new world

All of this affects the way we as Christians live out our salvation. The other day I was part of a meeting at which we discussed the vision of Christian schools. It was pointed out to us that the original founders were motivated by commitment and duty. The new generation of parents are motivated by choice and quality. You have to sell your product today. Even a membership meeting has to be looked at as a marketing opportunity, we were told by a seasoned principal. I asked him

when he had come to that insight. "One or two years ago," he told me. "Yes," I said. "That's about right, because we never looked at membership meetings that way before. We assumed that the membership was committed and that the Christian education we offered was not a commodity but a blessing."

See what consumerism has done to us, Wordgood? It's so much more difficult to build our Christian institutions on choice and comparative quality, especially when the quality does not include spiritual objectives.

There's something in me that says, "Don't surrender the way of commitment and duty." But another voice says that you have to adjust to new times and new expectations. I shouldn't glorify the past, either. Too much of that commitment and sense of duty was unquestioning and of the sheep-herd mentality. Christian education, for example, has gained so many new insights, and teachers understand so much better today what a child's individual needs are. Computer technology opens up so many possibilities in the classroom. The Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools is right on the money in developing teaching aids and student learning materials with interactive CD-ROMs.

But I am so glad you're coming on board to take over my job, Dear Wordgood. What we need is a 1-point or 2-point Canadian who stands fully in this brave new world with his or her feet firmly anchored in the good Word. My name, Truetype, reveals an oncoming obsolescence, what with scanners and the Internet. And so I want to turn around a saying in Chaim Potok's *The Chosen*, in which a father tells his son he wants to meet his son halfway. What I am saying to you is: "I have gone as far as I can go. Come and meet me the rest of the way."

*Forever Yours,  
Truetype*

(The next issue will carry Bert Witvoet's last editorial)

## Christian Courier

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- express opinions infused by Scripture and rooted in a Reformed perspective;  
- provide contact for the Christian community.

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## Letters

# 'Uneven' reporting not appreciated

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church, a binational body charged by synod to administer the programs, finance and personnel of the denomination. Specifically, we wish to express our concern about the inaccuracies contained in the *Christian Courier* article of May 31, 1999 (even though I gave accurate information to the reporter) and the use of a misleading headline. Please note the following.

"If the 1999 Synod of the Christian Re-

formed Church does not challenge...the CRC will dispense with..." That statement is simply not accurate. The continuation of Abuse Prevention or Disability Concerns is not on synod's agenda. There is no recommendation to "dispense" with any program at this time. The Board of Trustees is informing synod that it is reviewing the continuing need for some denominational services, and that a survey of the churches will be conducted to seek answers to such questions.

The article quotes several individuals with reference to Ms. Swagman's executive directorship from which she resigned almost a year ago. The article seems to suggest that there is a relationship between Ms. Swagman's experience as an executive director of Pastoral Ministries and a decision to evaluate the ministry of Abuse Prevention. We wish to state, without qualification, that there is no such relationship. Suggestions to the contrary are explicitly denied.

In a related report dealing with an interview with Al Dreise similar inaccurate generalizations are reported. The suggestion that the Board of Trustees "can wield such power as to undo synod-created Abuse prevention Ministry Office, together with its mandate, without due process" is needlessly inflammatory language. The Board of Trustees is the agent of synod and does not act in irresponsible ways. Synod itself is the

judge of whether the Board of Trustees exceeds its authority, a charge that synod has not laid at the feet of the Board since its inception in 1992.

We are accustomed to more even-handed reporting by *Christian Courier* reporters. We express our regret that the reporting on this sensitive matter appears to be an exception.

**Dr. Peter Borgdorff**  
Executive Director of Ministries  
Christian Reformed Church

## Proposal makes him angry

I read with considerable disappointment CC's report about the recommendation by the Pastoral Ministries Board that the Christian Reformed Church should abandon its congregational disability and abuse support functions. At the same time, I admired Peter Nicolai's candor in describing the treatment Beth Swagman received at the hands of a male-dominated hierarchy on 28th Street and Kala-mazoo [the church headquarters in Grand Rapids, Mich.]. And frankly, it's disgusting.

Equally disgusting is the bureaucrats' recommendation to get rid of the Disability Concerns office. As a former member of the Committee for Disability Concerns and the parent of an adult child with a disability, I see this as perhaps the most regressive proposal for action in the history of the CRC, and I'm angry about what's apparently the reasoning behind this foolishness. To suggest the rationale, as you reported, that "adequate resources are now available to the church members locally" is, simply put, profoundly and deeply ignorant.

The decision represents the rejection of a group of people on very spurious grounds; it's a direct attack on persons with disabilities. The "resources" most needed and so clearly unavailable among the CRC's bureaucrats are those of compassionate attitude, understanding and leadership.

The ideas the bureaucrats have put forward are at best vacuous, relying on a corporatist model of church, and without apparent understanding that it's a community they are leading and not a modern North American capitalist business enterprise.

While there are remarkable individuals within CRC communities throughout the denomination who demonstrate daily and unstinting commitment to supporting individuals with disabilities, the CRC retains institutionalized and systemic patterns of behavior that are deeply biased and discriminatory against people with disabilities or people that have been abused.

**Jake Kuiken**  
Calgary, Alta.

## Positive response, positive outcome?

This is in reference to the news stories on the Abuse Prevention Office in the May 31 issue of CC. The Task Group on Abuse Prevention in Christian Reformed Church's Classis Northern Alberta is one of the groups that sent a letter to the Board of Trustees asking them to hold off until further consultation had taken place on the decision about the denominational Abuse Prevention Office [i.e., the Pastoral Ministry Board's recommendation to disband that office].

We are very happy that the board responded positively to our request. We hope and pray that the outcome of this consultation will be an affirmation by the churches of the valuable service this office provides. We believe that this service should be maintained in its present full capacity, even if some structural changes may have to be made.

**For the Task Group,**  
**Harry A. Van Belle**  
Edmonton, Alta.

## Sing a new song

A recent article by Frank Devries entitled "What do we sing in church these days?" (CC, May 31) asked some very important questions about worship practices in the Christian Reformed Church. In my experience as a Christian musician I have found I've had to struggle with the same questions. Where is the CRC manual on contemporary praise and worship? I, too, have heard much talk concerning "change" one way or another (mostly the younger crowds wishing to move away from traditional style).

The "C" word is one I have some problems with. Change insinuates there is something inherently wrong with the way we've been worshipping. If we take a close look at the music in the *Psalter Hymnal*, we find some of the greatest hymns of all time, along with texts set to music by some of the greatest composers of all time. As a writer of contemporary songs I am inspired by these hymns written from the heights of joy to the lows of anguish. I try very hard in my own writing to capture the same feelings, the same sense of joy, the same sense of anguish that these writers felt.

I believe we should not try to change what we have but to continue in the tradition of excellence in music we know so well. We need leaders in music who can do more than sightread Beethoven verbatim. We need leaders in music that can do more than play the same tired CCM songs on guitar. Neither one will do.

We need leaders in music who can create, arrange, perform and motivate others to do the same for today's church. With today's culture, with today's concerns, with both today's young and old in mind. We need more music creators. I believe we need to encourage the musical writers and quit telling them, "Ah, jongen, der's no money in dat music ding!" We have literary scholars and writers who craft poetry and novels; artists who draw and paint. Where are the composers and songwriters? Throughout the Bible, those who had experienced God's incredible hand of love and mercy wrote songs and sang them to everyone. Does the Christian Reformed Church have a new song?

**Darrin Berg**  
Woodbridge, Ont.

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## Opinion/Letter

## Vision for Sale?

There is, no doubt, agreement that the Reformed Christian community in Canada has the opportunity as well as the obligation to live out as best it can the biblical principles it professes. The world should be able to look at our endeavors, including our various Christian institutions, and see something at work that points to the Kingdom yet to come and already here.

If the example shown by some of the leadership in Christian education over the last few years is any indication, we are, in my view, in deep trouble.

Two cases to illustrate my point:

### Case #1

Only a few years ago the Reformed community in Canada, and especially in Ontario, went through a rather wrenching experience. A group of some 20 teachers at one Christian school unanimously decided to ask the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) to represent them in their dealings with their school board. Another group of teachers, in St. Catharines, did the same by a very substantial majority.

Without rehashing the whole sad history, it is fair to state in summary that:

- a. the Ontario Christian School Teachers' Association was not pleased;
- b. the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools was not pleased;
- c. some individuals seemed to opine that a "union," of all things,

was beneath the dignity of Christians;

d. some persons opposed to the teachers exercising their rights under the Ontario Labour Relations Act were quite definite in their views that the provisions of the Labour Relations Act and the authority of the Ontario Labour Relations Board simply are not meant for teachers in Christian schools. Moreover, these provisions were held to be unreceptive, unfriendly, even hostile to the confessional integrity of Christian schools;

e. the board at the school where the teachers were unanimous was so displeased that it did all it could to prevent a collective agreement being reached, an illegal thing to do in Canada.

### The outcome

At the conclusion of the whole episode, an editorial in *Christian Courier* stated: "It would be a shame if in our Christian communities we would be ruled by a fear of having our neat little world disturbed by reasonable labor practices, and that one agency representing one part of our Kingdom vision - CLAC - is set aside as good enough for unbelievers but not good enough for agencies representing another part of our Kingdom vision - Christian schools."

"The rest," as they say, "is history." At the first school, after more than a year-and-a-half of trying, CLAC walked away from attempts to negotiate a collective agreement for the staff. The unfair

pressure exerted on the staff simply became too much for the teachers, and the legal measures that would have to be taken in order to assert their rights would have added to that. Dealing with the intransigence on the part of those who opposed CLAC did not warrant the potential damage to the school and its good operation.

CLAC did conclude a collective agreement between the Association of Christian Teachers and Support Staff (ACTSS) and the Association of Christian Education (ACE) of St. Catharines, thanks to the staff's conviction and perseverance. All involved in the process - staff, community, CLAC, as well as the school board - are to be commended for having arrived at a working solution, far from perfect though this be.

### Case #2

Fast forward now to the May 17, 1999, issue of *Christian Courier* featuring a front-page story entitled "Edmonton Christian schools waiting for OK to become part of public system." Following the story there is a section called "Details of the agreement," where I found the following: "Teachers will become members of the Alberta Teacher's Association. Support staff will become members of CUPE."

My first reaction was: Is this a sellout? But then I learned via the grapevine that the teachers actually voted in favor of joining. Whether this was an entirely

voluntary act is a question that comes to mind. I would prefer to think it was not. Regardless: this makes one weep!

The question I would ask is a variant on the views of the "opposed" leadership referred to in Case #1 above: Are, by some miracle, the Alberta Teacher's Association and CUPE "receptive" and "friendly," and not at all "hostile" to the confessional integrity of Christian schools?

I have not had the opportunity to study the Alberta Teacher's Association. But I have observed the *modus operandi* of various Ontario teachers' unions, and I have read some of the material produced by their leadership. The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) is known as one of the more militant, left-wing secular organizations. Speaking of being hostile to confessional integrity!

Has not the secular British Columbia Teachers Federation been engaged in a court battle to try and prevent graduates of a prominent Christian university from being certified as teachers because of their biblical beliefs? And is the Alberta Teacher's Association directionally different from its counterparts in Ontario or British Columbia?

The *Christian Courier* editorial quoted above referred to a Kingdom vision. One would be tempted to exclaim: what Kingdom vision?

Yes, there is a vision of the

Kingdom, the one that has no end, and we may try to live (and *must* live) as citizens of that Kingdom here and now! Let us not give up on that. Let us try a lot harder, listen more closely to what the Scriptures are telling us and not be first of all concerned with our own little kingdoms.

This is a wake-up call for other Christian school teachers in Alberta, in British Columbia and in Ontario. Fellow believers, we can do better! Time is running out.

### A warning

I cannot just leave the issue that caused the story in the May 17, 1999 issue of *Christian Courier*, i.e. the affiliation of the three Christian schools with the Edmonton public system. Listen to the editorial in the *Edmonton Journal* right after the decision was made: "In order to make this affiliation work, the Christian schools will have to surrender some of their autonomy."

In response to which the *Western Report*, after quoting and analyzing the *Journal* wrote: "One is driven to conclude that the reason the *Journal* wants to see the Christian schools 'affiliated' with the public ones is that this will spell the end of their Christianity. It is hard to imagine a clearer warning to those entrusted with their administration."

Did we just sell something?

**Hank Kuntz**  
Etobicoke, Ont.

## Peace outcome no victory for NATO

In writing my column "Principals & Powers" I have usually attempted not to comment on events as they are happening. With a two-week lead time between submission and publication there is always a danger of one's words being overtaken by events. This is what happened with my last column, in which I commented on the indictment of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic as a war criminal. I suggested that this development could prolong the Kosovo conflict. I am, of course, happy to be proved wrong on such a matter of life and death. I hope and pray that the recently announced peace between NATO and Yugoslavia quickly becomes reality and that the refugees will soon be able to return to their homes.

This does not, however, alter

my conviction that the NATO effort was the product of a serious error of judgment and that it effectively made a bad situation worse. The NATO bombing may or may not have stopped by the time this appears in print, but its deleterious effects will continue to haunt policy-makers in the West and in the Balkans for some time.

At present most of the refugees have nothing to go home to, which was not the case before the bombing began in March. To be sure, the Serbs are largely to blame for this and must be held accountable. Yet NATO must assume its share of responsibility and attempt to make amends in whatever ways most conform to the principles of justice.

**David T. Koyzis**  
Ancaster, Ont.

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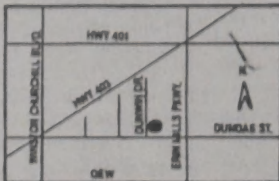
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## Arts/Media

Movies on video

## Screen 'Les Mis' not so passionate, deep as Hugo's redemptive tale

Marian Van Til

## Les Miserables

Liam Neeson, Geoffrey Rush, Uma Thurman, Claire Danes, Peter Vaughan, Hans Matheson, Reine Brynolfsson, Mimi Newman, Christopher Adamson. Written by Rafael Yglesias. Directed by Bille August.

This movie, which came out two years ago, is not a musical, but a dramatic film version of Victor Hugo's classic novel. Given the ongoing success of the musical stage adaptation of the story, bringing out another filmed version of the "straight" story (there have been five previous, beginning in 1935) probably seemed like a good idea: presumably there would be a built-in audience of "Les Mis" lovers who would gravitate to the film.

Whether that audience materialized or not is debatable. This film — despite Liam Neeson's stellar presence — didn't have a long theatre run, perhaps because those

## An unexpected redemptive act

Liam Neeson plays Jean Valjean, a man who has just been released from 19 years in prison for stealing bread. He has become hardened, vicious and self-centred through his bitter experience. Stuck with a damning yellow passport which will seemingly forever and always identify him as an ex-convict, he is once again hungry and at loose ends.

Needing a place to stay for the night, he is directed to the home of a saintly bishop and his housekeeper. The Bishop treats him with respect, but Valjean can't reciprocate. During the night Valjean

Valjean is dumbfounded. But he learns the Bishop has bought back his soul. In a kind of representation of Christ's love and redemption, the Bishop's act sets Valjean on a new and irrevocable path of forgiveness and service.

But, as in the Christian's spiritual journey, the ex-convict's journey toward full redemption will be fraught with obstacles which seem designed to waylay him, to make him stumble and ultimately fall off the path.

His one relentless adversary is the bloodless police inspector Javert, whose contained but dogged zeal is perfectly depicted by Geoffrey Rush (*Shine*, *Elizabeth*, *Star Wars I*). Javert is the perfect embodiment of Law — the letter of the law — for whom grace and forgiveness mean only a subverting of law.

## Inner workings not apparent

A major drawback of this particular film version is its failure to make us understand why Javert is so obdurately intent on exposing Valjean (who becomes a respectable city mayor and benevolent factory owner) for having been a parole-violating ex-convict. Nor do we truly come to understand Javert's inner workings, why he is so obsessed with carrying out the letter of the law. For that matter, we don't get to know Valjean inward-

ly for the girl, Cosette, and raise her as his own.

## Can't read their minds

The film takes various liberties with Hugo's story, many of them small, but some of more significance, and a few, irritating. (And, of course, since film cannot get inside characters' thoughts as a book can, it has to externalize and "physicalize" thoughts, but loses both subtlety and understanding of characters' motivations in the process.)

A few of those liberties:

Valjean doesn't just leave the Bishop's house with the silver; he physically attacks the bishop first — an unnecessarily obvious display of Valjean's capacity for "evil."

Valjean's escape to find Cosette is much shortened and

simplified, and actually adds a chase scene involving a horse-drawn wagon and men on horseback.

But the greatest change is the physically dramatic way in which the film ends in a final confrontation between Valjean and Javert, which, again, bypasses the subtlety of the novel.

The sets and historical backdrop of early 19<sup>th</sup> century Paris are beautifully recreated and the acting is mostly good. Yet there's a certain lack of passion in the storytelling here, which, in the end, doesn't have the immense emotional and moral impact of Hugo's novel. However, this *Les Miserables* is certainly worth seeing, and would be a good subject for viewing and discussing with students/youth groups.



Liam Neeson as Jean Valjean in *Les Miserables*.

familiar with the musical but not the 1600-page novel were taken aback by the seriousness of the story.

Hugo's novel teaches what might be called theological lessons while being simultaneously a movingly human story. It is a masterful examination of how we human beings react to being cut off from grace; of how the inability to forgive and not experiencing forgiveness can both eat us alive. Ultimately, this is a tale of fall and redemption.

steals the bishop's silver and slinks into the night. But the police quickly catch up with him and don't for a moment believe his story that the silver was a gift from the Bishop.

They return the thief to face his victim. To Valjean's utter puzzlement, the Bishop goes along with his story. But why did he not take the candlesticks too, when they had been offered, the Bishop wants to know — and a set of valuable candlesticks are brought out to add to his bag of stolen loot.

ly much, either.

Over the course of several decades, Javert hounds Valjean, catching up with him but not quite being able to catch him. Meanwhile, Valjean befriends an unmarried mother, Fantine (Uma Thurman), a former worker in his factory who has been forced to turn to prostitution to survive. Fantine's love for her daughter, whom she has had to allow to live and work with others, inspires Valjean, and he promises a dying Fantine that he will find and care

## Da Vinci's 'Last Supper' now restored

MILAN, Italy (EP) — One of the world's most famous paintings, Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper," is back on public display, following more than 20 years of restoration work. Art experts praised the restoration, saying the masterpiece in the Basilica of St. Mary of the Graces in Milan has regained its original "life and light."

In 1977 workers began to repair areas where paint had flaked off the wall, then expanded restoration efforts to include uncovering fragments of the original painting which had been repainted in earlier restoration efforts. Those earlier restoration efforts made it impossible to appreciate da Vinci's brilliant color choices, experts said. The painting, created by da Vinci from 1494 to 1498, shows Christ's last Passover meal with his disciples.

## See what lusting and being a bad speller will get you...

BELLFLOWER, Calif. (EP) — Author and publisher Ray Comfort was so annoyed with pornography peddlers "spamming" his e-mail that he decided to do something about it. He created "The Fright Site" with 18 misspelled key words, so when someone seeking pornography misspells a search word such as "porn" instead of "porn," or spells "sex" as "sxe," they could just find themselves in The Fright Site.

There, they will find themselves staring at the words, "Who-soever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already with her in his heart"

Matthew 5:28 [CLICK HERE TO GET OUT OF THIS PAGE.](#)

Clicking leads the visitor to other pages discussing the reality of lust and the need for salvation. So far, more than 3,000 people who have been searching the Internet for pornography have accidentally found the site.

For more information see: [www.raycomfort.com](http://www.raycomfort.com).

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## Church

# Ministry will stop buying back slaves

*Practice doing more harm than good, Christian group concludes*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Religion Today) — An American ministry to Sudan will stop redeeming slaves. Christian Freedom International which bought about a dozen slaves out of bondage last year, says it will discontinue the practice because it increases the slave trade.

"Our objective — and I believe the sincere objective of others — was to carefully investigate legitimate claims, redeem on a case-by-case basis, report our findings, and seek international pressure to end the hideous practice of slavery," CFI's Jim Jacobson says. "But what started as an act of mercy has turned into a debacle." According to Jacobson, dozens of Western organizations are raising funds to free slaves, and slave traders reportedly are benefiting because they can charge more.

"Selling slaves is now more profitable in Sudan than narcotics," Jacobson says. Slave traders use the profits to buy guns and hire people to conduct more raids on

villages and take more slaves. "Slave redemption activities are now enriching slave traders, slave dealers, and slave masters."

"We are not saying slavery does not exist, but what is the best way to solve the problem," CFI vice-president Robert Sweet told Religion Today.

In the early 1990s, groups were redeeming only a few people at a time, but now those numbers are in the hundreds. "People are redeeming 700 and 1,000 people at a time. That's different. It means that the slave trade is pumping more money into the economy and helping slave traders, who are not good guys," Sweet says.

The Washington, D.C.-based ministry will use other ways to end slavery in Sudan. CFI is not critical of organizations that continue to redeem slaves, says Sweet. "We are not against any other groups, we believe their intentions are good." However, CFI believes it is best to eliminate the financial incentive of slavery, cut off the flow



Slaves in Sudan wait to be freed by Western negotiators in 1997.

of Western money for redemption, and focus on prevention and rescue, Jacobson said.

The ministry is considering

ways to help the Sudanese protect themselves and rescue their own people. It also works as an advocate for the Sudanese among

American congressional and executive branch officials.

## Study finds American women becoming more religious, conservative

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — American women are becoming more religious and more conservative, according to a poll released earlier this year by the feminist Center for Gender Equality. Women polled were evenly divided when asked if elected officials should be guided by their religious values. In a similar survey done in 1992, 63 per cent of respondents said "religion and

politics shouldn't mix."

The study found a growing opposition to abortion among women. More than half (53 per cent) of the women surveyed said abortion should be illegal except in cases of rape, incest or a threat to the life of the mother, or should be illegal in all cases. That's an eight per cent drop in support for abortion-on-demand from a similar poll done two years earlier.

Diane Colasanto of Princeton Survey Research Associates, which conducted the poll, called the change on the abortion question "pretty dramatic."

The survey found that 75 per cent of American women consider religion "very important" in their lives, a six per cent increase since 1996. The number of women who say they pray each day was up by 11 per cent during the same time

period, and the percentage of women identifying themselves as "born-again or evangelical Christian" grew six per cent to 51 per cent.

Three-quarters of women surveyed (76 per cent) said religious leaders have a "somewhat positive" or "very positive" effect on the U.S.

One-third of the women surveyed agreed with the Southern

Baptist Convention's statement that wives should "submit graciously" to their husbands, and 48 per cent said they believe a society is better off if men are the primary wage-earners and women work at home.

Faye Wattleton, president of the feminist organization which commissioned the survey, called its findings "disturbing."

## Scholar says adapting faith to modern world not answer to secularism

SOUTH HAMILTON, Mass. (EP) — The number of unchurched adults is on the rise, causing some theologians to wonder if a generation of "mega-church" and "seeker-targeted" approaches is working.

A study by the Barna Research Group found that almost one-third of American adults (31 per cent) can be deemed "unchurched" — a proportion that represents 60-65 million unchurched adults. (For this survey a person was classified as "unchurched" if he or she had not attended a Christian church service during the past six months other than a special event such as a wedding, funeral or holiday service.)

One out of every seven unchurched persons (15 per cent) is a born-again Christian, and many unchurched adults integrate religious activities into their lifestyle. For instance, 10 per cent of the unchurched read the Bible in a typical week. One out of 12 (eight per cent) listen to Christian radio in a typical week.

George Barna, the president of Barna Research Group, noted that Americans feel tremendous freedom to construct their own religious perspectives and practices, regardless of traditions and time-honored teachings. "It is amazing that we live in a period during which people are more interested in spirituality than at any time in

the past half century, yet they are seeking the answers to their spiritual questions and needs from sources other than Christian churches," Barna said. "The public is sending a clear message to Christian leaders: make Christianity accessible and practical or don't expect their participation."

### Misreading the signs

But Dr. David Wells, well-known author, and theology professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, believes Barna is misreading the data. "His observation is correct in that we are in a time in which people construct their own religious worlds," Wells told the *Charlotte Christian News*.

Wells said Barna's conclusion regarding why this is happening is "based on a complete misunderstanding."

"The modern world is so intruding into the way that people see themselves and see life that traditional biblical belief is becoming more and more unpalatable," Wells said. "People today are willing to believe in the inside god, a god of their own intuition. They are not willing to believe in the outside God, who has spoken to us through Christ and in His Word and who holds us accountable."

Wells added, "When Barna seeks to adapt Christian faith to the habits of the modern world, he is doing precisely what shouldn't be

done."

What should be done? According to Wells, we need time to understand the world in which we are living, but he doesn't believe that surveys and polling give us that understanding. "Simply counting noses reduced to percentages is not understanding," Wells said.

Then, Wells added, we need to assert biblical faith uncompromisingly. "There were hundreds of gods in the biblical period, and biblical prophets constantly called people back to the one true God," Wells said, noting that today's preachers should do the same.



## Church

# Rip Van Winkle's take on an immigrant church

Joe Reitsma

*The Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church of Bowmanville, Ont., was founded on October 28, 1949. That birth will be celebrated on the weekend of September 4, 5 and 6, 1999. The following captures Rehoboth's history through the eyes of a 14-year old Rip Van Winkle, who wakes up only once every five years in the midst of Rehoboth life, observing his relatives and their fellow church members:*

**October 28, 1949.** Rients Van Winkle was born in Driels, Friesland. His father helps people from the Netherlands settle on farms around Bowmanville, Ontario. His mother was thrilled to meet Rev. Moes. His family living room served as a worship centre for a year or two. Rients went to Sunday School in the kitchen.

**May 17, 1954.** Reindert Van Winkle was born in Amsterdam. His large family with many boys first worked in the woods near Cochrane, Ontario, but Cochrane was too cold. There was a rumor that there was work around Bowmanville for the brothers. They arrived at a basement church one Sunday morning and were told that 80 other families had arrived in 1953. His older brothers immediately joined Rev. Moes' youth choir.

**September 8, 1959.** Richard Van Winkle is playing in the woods behind Knox Christian School. The boy next door teased him because he was going to a Dutch school but Richard's dad said that John Knox was not Dutch but Scottish. As he thought about that in church, he stared up at the high beams, not hearing much of what Reverend Schaafsma said.

**September 7, 1964.** Rinze Van Winkle sits in the family station wagon with eight brothers and sisters on the way to church in the evening. Don, who is also with them, is from the local training school. They had just finished the milking. While milking, Don foolishly had been smoking near some hay. Dad had gotten mad at him, so the friendship was a little strained. That morning Rev. Verbrugge had had a sermon with three points: 1. Humility; 2. Humility; 3. Humility. Everyone in the car was busy digesting the points.

**October 7, 1969.** Rod Van Winkle is sitting beside three older brothers, who all have very long hair and blue jeans. Rev. Vandenberg has a sermon on love.

He distinguishes between selfish love and giving love. Rod dreams about Julie. He's not even sure if she knows he exists.

**December 2, 1974.** Ron Van Winkle is startled from his slumbers in the portable classroom behind Knox. The teacher had been talking about the Israelites in the house of bondage. He had been thinking about his father working at General Motors. He wasn't sure that he wanted to work there.

**September 6, 1979.** Ralph Van Winkle's sister has a date. The fellow does not go to church, but instead goes to the Mosport race track. The next week they go to church together. Rev. DeJager has a sermon on commitment. The congregation sings "Blest Be the Tie That Binds."

**January 9, 1984.** Robert Van Winkle has been watching television a lot. He wants to become Prime Minister of Canada. He noticed others had become prime ministers. His sister says she also wants to be Prime Minister, but their parents say that being an elder or deacon is more important.

**August 15, 1989.** Ryan Van Winkle's father is a teacher. His two brothers, one in university and one in graduate school, hope to become a doctor and a teacher. He misses them. His dad is also a youth elder. Rev. Fennema is conducting the future wedding of his sister. He hopes she'll move closer to home.

**June 7, 1994.** Rick Van Winkle's dad is on the building committee. His father strongly believes that with God all things are possible. After about 20 years of exploring all the possibilities regarding what to do with an impossible building, a brand new, renovated building comes into being.

**April 12, 1999.** Randy Van Winkle's father has just been telling him some stories about building a house in Honduras. He imagines the water that washed away those houses before his father came there. His mother is on Rehoboth CRC's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee. They're planning big things for September 4-6. There will be an open house, special worship, celebrations, picnic and skits. His mom will be in a skit about something during the years when Rev. Abma was the pastor. Well, that should be easy. He remembers lots of things himself.

## Finding my roots among the tulips

Having grown up in Holland, Michigan, May has always meant one thing to me: "Tulip Time". Our annual salute to the founders of our fair city always includes parades, "klompen" dancers, and, of course, tulips. As a child, it meant time off from school to dress in a Dutch costume and scrub streets, or represent our elementary school in a parade. As an adult, it has usually meant avoiding a home-going during the third week in May lest I get stuck in traffic behind tourist buses.

That changed this year.

My parents-in-law were in town from Washington State, and for the first time their trip to western Michigan coincided with Tulip Time. So off we went to Holland. My parents-in-law are immigrants from the Netherlands, and found the whole experience very charming. They loved touring the windmill De Zwaan and watching the klompen dancers kick and swirl in their costumes.

I expected them to enjoy it. What surprised me was how much I did, too. We included in our tour stops at two museums, one in Holland and one in Grand Rapids. The Holland museum has moved to a new building since I last saw it as part of a field trip in fourth grade, and unlike then, I paid better attention this time.

### The pastor behind the paper

We went there to see a special exhibit of Rembrandt etchings, but I was especially moved by the display on "Faith and Commitment," a display which holds a permanent space in the museum. I saw an old pulpit, and on the pulpit notes from a sermon by Holland founder A.C. Van Raalte. On the pulpit rested a rack with a display card that said it had been used by Van Raalte to keep track of his sermon notes.

The rack was small, and the sheets of paper used by Van Raalte for his sermon were smaller, less than 5 x 7 inches. His scrawl was easily visible on the paper, and as I studied the notes, I thought - for the first time - about who Van Raalte was.

Of course, I know about Van Raalte. I learned in school about the *Afscheiding* (Secession of 1834 in which dissenters left the state Hervormde Kerk in the Netherlands). I knew that he founded our city. Holland has a street named after him, and my grandfather was once custodian at Van Raalte Elementary School. I know about Van Raalte.

## Chapter & Verse



Al Wolters  
• Mary S. Hulst Antonides

But when I saw those sermon notes, I wondered about him as a person, as a preacher, as a pastor. What did he preach to that struggling immigrant community? What did he preach when it looked as if they were going to be successful in founding a church, a city, a college? What issues of pastoral care did he have to deal with? How much was his life like mine, and how was it different?

### Most valuable heritage

After enjoying the rest of the museum we walked across the street to Centennial Park. Among the beds of tulips is a larger-than-life bronze statue of Van Raalte, standing straight, Bible in hand. As tourists strolled with cotton candy and caramel apples, I thought about this man, and how much of his beliefs, his passions, his vision for the Christian life had been passed down to me.

That evening, we went to the Grand Rapids Art Museum, which is currently hosting a wonderful exhibit of the work of Dutch artists, including Van Gogh. As I walked among the images, the voices on the cassette tape I had rented told me about the artists and their art, including many mentions of faith, and Calvinism, and Christianity, and even the Protestant work ethic.

The paintings were beautiful, indeed some breathtaking, but the strongest impression I took away from the evening in the museum was the heritage of faith I have been given by people I have never met.

Did Van Gogh know that someday a rookie preacher from Grand Rapids, Michigan, would look upon his art and wonder about him, the son and grandson of Dutch Calvinist preachers? Did Van Raalte know that his sermon notes would move not only those who heard those sermons, but also those who saw the notes, decades later, safely tucked away in a museum display case? No. Of course not. But I hope that someday I get the chance to tell them Thank you.

Mary Hulst Antonides is pastor of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Send your questions to

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## Feature

# For whoever eats this bread

Berta Hosmar

"Guess what?" asked Christopher (not his real name). He entered the kitchen that Sunday afternoon, snuggled close to me and kissed my hand. As always, that gesture made me feel like royalty. Christopher knows that and tries to use it to his own advantage.

I looked into his adoring, slightly slanted eyes. "What is it?" I asked, although I already knew the answer, for this was the fourth time within an hour Christopher had uttered these two words.

"I'm in love. Karin is just beautiful," whispered Christopher mysteriously. Karin is one of his co-workers at the sheltered workshop and at least 25 years his senior.

"That's wonderful," I replied for the fourth time. "Now, why don't you go to your room to make your bed. I know you can do a good job."

"No thanks," answered Christopher, polite as always.

"I think you should," I argued briefly, knowing full well that when Christopher is in a stubborn mood, he simply refuses to obey.

"I'm too young to make my bed. I'm only 32. I'm going to my room for another music session," my charge for the weekend announced. Two minutes later the house almost shattered from the rock music that exploded from his ghetto blaster.

We have learned from experience that asking him to turn the music down will only help for two minutes. But since Christopher has been a frequent guest at our home for many years, we are used to his antics. We

have had several developmentally delayed children and young adults in our home for short periods of time, to give their parents a break from the constant care they require. Christopher, who is fairly independent and has a sunny disposition, is an easy placement. We've discovered that, although he can read and print only a few words, he often understands more than we give him credit for.

As far as we know, his parents – wonderful, outgoing people – do not attend church regularly, but they have no objections when we take their son to church with us. How much he understands is hard to say, but he loves socializing with everybody after the service.

We have told him God loves him, and he can sing "Jesus Loves Me," but he shows little interest when we read the children's Bible. Our five-year-old grandson, while listening to the story of Matthew the tax collector, when asked: "Why didn't people like Matthew?" came up with an answer suitable for the nineties: "Because he took their credit cards." But Christopher, when asked another question about the same story, sighed deeply, looked at his watch and announced: "It's time for my music session. I want to go to my room."

That's why I didn't quite know what to do that evening. We would have a communion service, and, knowing Christopher, I was afraid he would partake of the Lord's Supper.

Should I stay home with him? But I had already stayed home with him that morning. I thought of the words of the liturgy, words I



*"We would have a communion service, and, knowing Christopher, I was afraid he would partake of the Lord's supper."*

had grown up with: "All who do not repent and who do not put their trust in the Lord Jesus... are warned to keep themselves from the holy sacrament." I assumed that Christopher really did not have a clue as to what it meant to eat the bread and drink the wine, and I was almost certain that he was not a confirmed member of a church.

"Don't worry, let's take him and see what happens," advised my husband, but my Calvinistic upbringing forced me to talk to Christopher. "You see, when people take a small piece of bread tonight in church, and drink a little wine from a tiny cup, that means that Jesus loves them," I explained. "Now, you told me, Christopher, that you are too young to make your bed, so I guess you're too young to eat that bread and drink from that tiny glass. So why don't you just pass the plate from me to Albert? It isn't really for you."

"Jesus loves me, this I know," Christopher started to hum, and I stopped dead in my tracks. Who was I to say that Jesus did not die for this special young man with the mind of a child? We would take him to church and just relax.

The first part of the service went well. Christopher, as always, behaved properly. He seldom talks out of place, although occasionally he will imitate the gestures of the pastor, or, when bored, lift up his arm for everybody to see, sigh deeply and study his watch intently, much to the delight of the children sitting behind him.

Sometimes, when the minister raises his voice, you can hear Christopher grunt approvingly: "Right on man! That was great!" but the congregation takes those small incidents in stride.

The time came for the celebration of Communion. The minister talked about living water, and Christopher proved that, indeed, he was paying attention, for we heard him saying: "Water! Great! I'm thirsty" – "great" being his favorite word at the moment.

The bread was served and Christopher

took a piece, as we had more or less expected he would. "Great," he said as he ate it, without waiting for everybody else. Then he sat quietly.

We relaxed.

Then the tray with the glasses was passed, and this time Christopher took one and held it expectantly, just like everyone else, until the minister spoke the blessing. To see him sitting there, waiting, a solemn expression on his innocent face, moved me. I felt tears coming to my eyes. "This can't be wrong," I thought and I found myself praying for him.

Then it happened. Christopher lifted his glass high and solemnly blessed it with his other hand, just like the minister.

Then, when everybody drank the wine, he lowered the glass to his nose, sniffed noisily, sniffed again, then said loudly, "Great! Champagne!" He then proceeded to drink and cried: "Yuk! That tastes horrible!"

Immediately the rather solemn atmosphere in the sanctuary changed. We heard suppressed, but prolonged laughter all around us. People sitting in front of us turned around joyfully, grinning at Christopher. A lady behind us tried to stifle her delighted hiccups in a kleenex. It was perhaps the happiest Communion service our congregation had ever celebrated.

But amidst all the commotion Christopher remained calm and dignified, handed me his glass and announced triumphantly, "That was great! I did it!"

"Jesus must have been smiling," somebody told us after the service; and another person said simply: "Suffer the little children..."

"Why did you eat the bread and drink the wine?" I asked Christopher when we drove home. Christopher sighed deeply, looked at his watch, then said matter-of-factly: "It was great! Jesus loves me!"

And that explained it all.

*Berta Hosmar is a freelance writer who lives in Whitby, Ont.*

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## Synod

# Synod '99 – mostly sweetness and light



Redeemer College President Justin Cooper (L) joined Dan Vander Laan (Classis Southeast U.S.) and other delegates for a break.

## Bert Witvoet and Marian Van Til

It may rate as the shortest Christian Reformed synod in history. It was also the first ever to be held in Canada, thanks to the late Klaas Terpstra of Hamilton, Ontario. A few years ago when he was a delegate to synod, Terpstra showed his pride in Canada and Redeemer College by asking that a future synod be held in Ancaster.

Synod began on Saturday, June 12, and ended five working days later on Thursday, June 17, at 3:30 p.m. just before a minor rainstorm punctuated the last coffee/tea/juice and cookie break on the front lawn. The fact that it was no cloudburst seemed appropriate. This had been a sweet and light synod. And the excellent food served by the Redeemer kitchen staff helped to convince everyone that all was well – in Ancaster, at least. Redeemer's facilities were praised by executive secretary David Engelhard, who talked about a "seamless transition" between setting up at Calvin College in former years and at Redeemer College this year.

## But a breath of time

The shortness of synod had a lot to do with the light agenda (no earthshaking decisions were made) and perhaps with the fact that synods these days are not as deliberative as they once were. At least, delegate Bernard De Jonge is of the opinion that synods no longer discuss things in depth. He felt he had been "massaged" by huge

hands. But visitor Gordon Pols said that it is synod itself that is huge, and huge bodies are never conducive to deliberation. He looks more to classes for good discussions.

There is another reason for synod's short duration. Synods of late have shown greater harmony. There are fewer discontented delegates since large groups of "orthodox" or "concerned" members left the denomination, mostly over the church allowing women to be ordained. There are few displays of anger and disunity on the floor of synod as delegates struggle with issues. The debates are a lot healthier in that respect. Less heat; more light. And less time taken! (I'm sure the same holds true for our orthodox brothers and sisters as they meet in their assemblies).

## Push your buttons

It was fun to see delegates use the electronic voting machines whenever a voice vote did not sound forth a clear majority. The results were instant. At one point chair Wayne Brouwer decided he could not judge the size of the "ayes" and "nays" and asked for an electronic vote. Result: 90 for, 88 against. No wonder even his Reformed ears were not tuned finely enough for that difference.

Because synod ended so quickly, Engelhard needed to know how many people would stay for supper, how many for meals the next day (since plane tickets had been set for a Saturday

during the times when delegates were finding their seats after a break.

The only thing that did not seem to work well at this synod was the phone system. Relatives had a hard time reaching their beloved delegates and reporters at the *Banner* office complained about communication hassles.

For the rest, what else made this synod special? Let me turn to Marian Van Til to answer that question. I'm almost out of here. "Two more weeks," I told several people who accosted me at synod and asked about my imminent retirement. This is my last synod as a CC reporter. I will miss the comradery.

## Marian's view

Bert mentioned comradery. That is an element that one feels at synods, even when only an observer. This one felt particularly warm and friendly, though I personally felt some negative repercussions from the story CC did in the May 31 issue entitled "CRC board wants to can abuse prevention office." The Board of Trustees and executive director of ministries Peter Borgdorff felt that story was "inaccurate."

Even if the controversy over that story CC carried was not exactly resolved, it was at least handled in a friendly, and consequently Christian, manner. Peter Borgdorff and I discussed the issue and agreed to disagree. Both of us would have regretted being on bad terms, either personally or as the institutions we represent, and indeed, we are not.

The change of venue seemed, in

some subtle way, to effect this synod, though it's hard to put a finger on just exactly how. To be sure, a high percentage of Canadian delegates – and a particularly high number of elders, it seemed – brought their wisdom to the floor by participating in the debates. Considering that the Canadian congregations make up about a quarter of the North American CRC, the input they give to synod is proportionately far greater than their numbers. But then that's true most years, so the home-field advantage, so to speak, probably wasn't a factor.

One major benefit for the church as a whole of this synod's foray into Canada is that many American delegates who had seldom or never set foot in Canada got a taste of the country and of Redeemer College, and something of a feel for the uniqueness of the Canadian part of the CRC. Some American delegates sometimes forgot about their location and continued to talk about "up in Canada they do things differently than we do here," reports George VanderVelde. He had to remind them that they were in Canada.

But according to such delegates to whom I talked, it was a good and enlightening experience, one which will result in them having a clearer picture of the CRC in Canada. And since the Christian Reformed Church in North America is firmly committed to being a bi-national church, that new perspective can only benefit the church as a whole.



Synod 1999 executive officers (from left): Second Clerk Henry Kranenburg (Eastern Canada); First Clerk George Vandervelde (Toronto); President Wayne Brouwer (Holland); and Vice-President Stanley Mast (Grand Rapids South).



## Synod

# A 'nervous' synod recommends repentance

*Churches have failed in pastoral care for homosexual members*



Dr. Peter Borgdorff, executive director of CRC ministries (l.), and Dr. Mel Hugen, chair of the study committee.

Bert Witvoet

ANCASTER, Ont. — One can tell when Synod deals with a hot potato. It begins to worry about how its decisions will be perceived by the press and its constituents. Synod's discussion of the report by a study committee which was to "give direction about and for pastoral care for homosexual

members" was marked by a fair bit of nervousness about public perception. At times delegates were anticipating the headlines that might blaze forth from front pages as a result of the press's "misunderstanding" of what was really taking place.

It was clear from the onset that the delegates did not have any

serious disagreement with the contents of the committee's report, which continued the theme of Synod 1973's report, namely that being a homosexual is not sin but practising homosexuality is, and that the church needs to extend pastoral care to its homosexual members. The focus of the 1999 report was on how the Christian Reformed Church had failed to live up to its 1973 promises, and what it could do to remedy that.

## Not very pastoral

Synod balked at the notion that its advisory committee had started out its list of recommendations with one that reminded the churches that "explicit homosexual practice must be condemned as incompatible with obedience to the will of God as revealed in Holy Scripture." Delegates felt that the Christian Reformed Church's position is well-known and it was seen as both redundant and unpastoral to begin with such a negative statement.

George Vandervelde of Classis Toronto said that a report that wants to confess failures and improve its pastoral ministries should not start out by wagging its finger at the people it wants to minister to. Other delegates echoed that sentiment.

Richard De Ruyter of Pacific Northwest said that "instead of extending grace [to our homosexual neighbor] we slap their knuckles with the ruler of righteousness."

The recommendation to condemn homosexual practice took an almost comical and bumpy ride. It was first tabled, then after all the other recommendations from the advisory committee had been dealt with, it was taken off the table and

withdrawn by the advisory committee. Then it was moved again by a delegate, after which the body defeated the motion. The concern now came up that the defeat of this motion would show up in the acts of synod after all. But after lunch the chair announced to everyone's relief that, according to Robert's Rules of Order, a defeated motion that was made from the floor should not be recorded in the acts. Only defeated motions made by synod's committees deserved that status.

Synod was concerned about the public perception of having voted down a condemnation of homosexual practice, fearing that the press or constituents might

## Prayer of repentance

*Lord, our gracious God,  
We have sinned against you.  
We have not done the things we ought to have done.  
We have not kept the promises we made.*

*Instead of trying to become a place where persons who love you  
and are homosexual could find a gracious dwelling,  
We confess that we have continued to build walls.  
We have avoided them.  
We have been cruel.  
We have called names and used insulting language.  
We have wished that they would just go away.*

*Truly, Lord, there is little health in us.  
We have wronged these children of yours,  
these brothers and sisters of ours.  
And we repent of our sins.  
We are sorry for what we have done  
and for what we have left undone.*

*Lord, forgive us our sins through the blood of Jesus.*

*Dear heavenly Father, we love you.  
We love you for keeping your promises.  
And we want to be like you.  
We want to keep your promises.  
Help us, Father, to do so.  
Help us to love our gay and lesbian sisters and brothers.  
Help us love with words and deeds.*

*Strengthen our resolve to listen to their stories,  
to share their pain  
to learn from others,  
to walk together on life's journey.*

*Lord, we have questions.  
We do not know everything.  
Give us the grace not to act otherwise.  
Give us the humility to attend to what we know.*

*We do know that life is more complicated than we wish.  
We do know that we need your forgiveness for the past  
And your grace for the future.  
As we continually struggle to be the church,  
Faithful to your Word,  
Faithful to each other.  
In Christ. Amen.*

## FROM COAST TO COAST

English Radio

### Back to God Hour

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Port Alberni - CJAV 7:00 pm  
Prince George - CIRX 7:00 am  
Princeton - CHOR 8:00 am  
Smithers - CFBV 9:15 am  
Summerland - CHOR 8:00 am  
Vernon - CJIB 9:30 pm

#### QUEBEC

Montreal - CIQC 7:30 am

#### ALBERTA

Brooks - CIBQ 8:00 am  
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High River - CHRB 6:30 pm  
Edmonton - CKER 11:00 pm  
Westlock - CFOK 7:30 am

#### SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan - CJSL 8:00 am  
Weyburn - CFSL 8:00 am

#### MANITOBA

Altona - CFAM 9:30 am  
Steinbach - CHSM 8:00 am  
Winnipeg - CKJS 9:15 am

#### ONTARIO

Atikokan - CHAK 9:30 am  
Chatham - CFCO 6:30 am

1500 Fort Frances - CFOB

1400 Guelph - CJOY

1490 Hamilton - CHAM

800 Kapuskasing - CKAP

1240 Kingston - WBDK

94.3 London - CKSL

1400 Newmarket - CKDX

1230 Oshawa - CKDO

1450 Owen Sound - CFOS

940 Pembroke - CHVR

Sarnia - CHOK 7:30 am

Stratford - CJCS 8:45 am

600 Windsor - CKLW 8:30 am

Wingham - KKNX 10:30 am

1340 NEW BRUNSWICK

1230 Saint John - CHSJ 9:30 am

1280

101.9 PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

1370 Charlottetown - CFCY 7:00 am

1280 Digby - CKDY 6:00 am

1190 Halifax - CFDR 8:30 am

1190 Kentville - CKEN 8:30 am

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950 New Glasgow - CKEC 7:30 am

1250 Weymouth - CKDY 8:30 am

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## THE

## BACK TO GOD HOUR



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## Synod



Reporter Peter Siofstra (l.) talks with colleagues Jim Dekker and Jack Westerhof.

misconstrue the intent. There should be no doubt about the CRC's position that Scripture forbids homosexual practice, said the delegates. Both Report 1973 and this year's committee report make that very clear.

Synod did, in fact, express its mind on condemnation of homosexual practice a little earlier when it replaced the phrase "Scripture seems to forbid such sexual intimacy with persons of the same sex" with the phrase "Scripture forbids such sexual intimacy with persons of the same sex." Synod said that the phrase "seems to forbid" is inconsistent with the position taken in Report 1973.

### No prayer amendments

Synod agreed with its committee to "call the churches to repentance for their failures to minister to those who experience same sex attractions," and it offered a sample prayer (see sidebar on previous page) as a model for those churches in their expression of repentance. In fact, reporter Peter Siofstra of Classis Niagara led synod in praying this prayer of repentance. After the prayer, one member of the audience was heard to say, "I didn't do those things."

Not all delegates felt good about having this prayer sent out to all churches. In fact, Bernard De Jonge of Classis Hamilton thought that a call for repentance based on an informal survey was a form of manipulation. But the motion passed easily.

Just before that, synod did not accept the advice of its advisory committee to change two sections in the sample prayer. The advisory committee had asked synod to replace the references to "homosexual" and "gay and lesbian sisters and brothers" with the phrase those "who experience same sex

attractions." The committee saw that as a kind of "labeling" which reduces a person to some aspect of her or his person.

George Vandervelde saw the advisory committee's recommendation as another sign of nervousness and asked synod not to amend the sample prayer since churches are free to use their own language anyway. Besides, he and others felt that the prayer would be stronger if it used the terminology most people use.

Melvin Hugen, chair of the study committee, said that speaking of those who "experience same-sex attractions" seems to include only those who have that experience but don't act on it, i.e., those who hold the right moral position. We have to learn to sit down also with "public sinners" – those who practice homosexuality, he said.

Synod agreed not to change the wording of the sample prayer.

### Time to respond

Synod also agreed to send a letter along with the committee's report, inviting churches to hold an adult education class to discuss the reports of 1973 and 1999 and submit a response by April 1, 2000, summarizing discussions and reactions to these reports.

To help the churches in their discussions, the CRC's official publication, *The Banner*, was asked to include a series of articles on these two reports and their ministry suggestions. And CRC Publications was asked to publish a brief booklet summarizing the 1973 and 1999 reports.

The synodical committee was asked to consider these responses, modify its report accordingly, and submit its final report to Synod 2002.

## Two weak reeds

"I'm tired of being challenged every time I have an opinion," Julia asserted. Her tone was flippant and careless. Ben shrugged his shoulders and rolled his eyes. "It's not as if you pay any attention to mine," he tossed back. Both pretended not to care and looked away defiantly. But I noticed a fleeting look of anguish cross their faces.

When Ben and Julia were children they learned that to be open and vulnerable brought criticism and pain. So each of them coped by developing a defensive "chip on the shoulder" personality.

However, when they met five years ago they believed those painful days were behind them. They found in each other what they thought they missed in their own families. Their relationship was one of love and affection and each felt valued and affirmed by the other. Their wedding day was one of joy and hope.

After a few years of marriage their relationship became part of their everyday routine. They no longer went out of their way to affirm one another. What attracted them to each other now became an issue of contention. Their constant need for affirmation became a stumbling block towards interdependence and personal maturity.

### *Spiritual growth is an important part of becoming whole from emotional vulnerabilities and brokenness.*

Furthermore, they were angry with God. They often prayed for guidance and understanding, yet their relationship continued to deteriorate.

Their hope for counselling is to salvage what is left of their relationship.

### Two strands

In last month's column I wrote about the confusion we sometimes experience between emotional and spiritual growth. This time I would like to give readers a glimpse of how spiritual and emotional growth can be seen as separate strands woven together into one strong cord.

Emotional or psychological growth is about interacting effectively with the world around us while moving through the transitions and crisis of life. Spiritual growth, on the other hand, is about the journey of transformation we undergo as we come to know God and live out the implications thereof.

Spiritual growth always takes place within our given psychological state and vice versa.

Emotional or spiritual growth is *not* an option we can take or leave. Life itself is a process of development and the only choice we have is whether growth moves us toward wholeness or toward an increasingly dehumanized or destructive way of being.

## Getting Unstuck



Arlene Van Hove

So, you may ask, what does the above have to do with the anecdote?

Julia's and Ben's need to be constantly affirmed by the other is about the lack of a solid sense of self on both of their parts. This vulnerability does not allow them to resolve crises effectively. Neither is able to stand on his or her own two feet. Their mutual dependence causes them to fall every time the other is not there for them.

Anger and disappointment about the other's lack of support has become a prevalent part of their relationship. Furthermore, to protect their fragile sense of self they've again taken on their familiar and defensive "chip on the shoulder" stance. Consequently, their interactions consist of angry criticisms, while each is oblivious to the part each play in the system.

Ben and Julia need to begin developing a stronger sense of themselves as individuals, and to take responsibility for their own feelings, thoughts and actions as they begin to make decisions that will allow them to develop their own gifts. They need to learn how to walk the road of balance between being an individual and being one half of a couple. They need to find a balance in the amount of support either of them can give the other. None of this will be easy, but persistence will find understanding and bring back love and co-operation.

### With God's help

It will also be helpful for Ben and Julia to discuss their perceptions and expectations of God. And they need to understand and accept their own, as well as each others' expectations and frailties, and seek value, support and redemption from the One who sacrificed himself for them. They need to pray for courage and strength in facing the fear and apprehension they will experience when they try to put their relationship on a healthier, functioning track.

Spiritual growth is an important part of becoming whole from emotional vulnerabilities and brokenness. At the same time, therapy earned out within a Christian understanding of human nature can also richly enhance spiritual growth. Neither is a substitute for the other, but together they work as a means of grace through which God works out his almighty plan.

*Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C. The therapeutic characters and situations she writes about are fictional, but reflect many people's struggles.*



## Synod

## CRC says No to more restructuring

Marian Van Til

ANCASTER, Ont. — The Christian Reformed Church synod has decided that the church has had enough restructuring for a while. Synod did not approve the numerous recommendations brought by a committee appointed three years ago to study the church's structure



Henry Newman

for ministry in the United States.

An 80-page report from that study committee brought a comprehensive package of recommendations which it felt would make the church more responsive to its membership scattered across the continent, which would, in turn, make the church and all its ministries more effective. The study committee's report asserted that the church needs a "continuous improvement" mentality ("once Reformed but always reforming") rather than an "if it ain't broke don't fix it" mentality.

But synod decided, and various delegates made speeches to the effect, that there is much less "broke" in the way the CRC is structured and in the way its agencies collaborate their work than the study committee thought there was. Minister delegate Leroy Christoffels of Classis Minnkota (Worthington, Minn.) called the report's recommendation for restructuring the church "trying to kill a fly with a sledgehammer."

## Major proposals

The study committee had noted that in the CRC (as well as in five other denominations whose structure was examined) "there is concern about a perceived distance between the members of the local churches and the denominational ministries." This gap needs to be bridged, it said. "We need to have a structure which delivers... benefits to all members of our churches." The study committee distilled the immense amount of work it did, including visits across the denomination and 70 interviews, into six

major proposals:

a) Each classis should develop a classical ministries committee.

b) A new concept of regional ministry development should be tested.

c) Administrative staff should be assigned team responsibility for implementing and integrating ministry decisions approved by synod and the Board of Trustees.

d) The Board of Trustees should be classically based.

e) The governance structure of agencies should be altered, and agency concentration on the development and delivery of ministry should be enhanced.

f) The Canadian structure adopted by Synod 1997 should be modified somewhat to blend with this report's recommendations.

Synod did not accept those proposals as a comprehensive package, though it did adopt several in modified form. Synod was convinced that the organizational structures already in place allow for the improving of communication throughout the church and its agencies, and for improved "delivering" of denominational resources to classes and congregations. Nor did it want to change the size or make-up of the Board of Trustees (BOT) (one representative for each classis would mean a 47-member board instead of the current size of 19, six of whom are Canadian).

## Classis as 'stepchild'

Synod wanted to emphasize that the classis is an important entity in Reformed church structure, though the "action" is often seen to be either in congregations or at synod. The study committee had said that well-developed ministry planning at the classical level was "one of the most essential building blocks" in its vision of an "adjusted" church structure. While synod didn't embrace that adjusted structure, it wanted to emphasize



Ray Elgersma

the importance of classes as a group of neighboring CRCs who can, and do, and should develop many effective ministries together.

So synod recommended that each classis establish a classical ministries committee whose purpose would be to "assess and guide the planning, organization, implementation and evaluation of ministries within the classis in order to develop them in a vital way and ensure integrated, wholistic [sic] ministry efforts which utilize the resources of the churches effectively."



Shirley Roels

Synod envisioned a classical ministries committee also helpful in finding and engaging the talent of church members within it, helping to channel denominational ministry resources to the classis; supervising joint classical ministries, when appropriate; and providing "supporting information, education, resources and Christian encouragement to emerging and established CRC churches within the classis."

Classis Pella had already tried such a committee and it failed miserably, said one of its minister delegates, Ronald Bouwkamp. "It was a very sour experience," he asserted. Classis Holland also initially had trouble getting such a committee going, but according to its delegate Rev. Doug Fauble, it was now working fine. Several other delegates, including one from Classis Muskegon, testified that their classis has set up such a committee and are finding it a useful, helpful tool. And several have just put such a committee in place but haven't been able to judge its effectiveness yet.

Going beyond classical boundaries, synod instructed the Board of Trustees (in consultation with the agency boards) to explore the possibility of "regional ministry teams," as the study committee had recommended. Such "teams"

would presumably allow neighboring classes in a given area to band together to conduct ministries of a kind and in a way they would not be able to do alone. The BOT is to report its results to Synod 2001.

## Common regions

Synod adopted one other study committee proposal: it will require the BOT to develop common geographic regions across the continent "within which all CRC agencies will conduct their work." Currently, the U.S. and Canada are divided into different geographical regions by the different agencies, with only some overlap. This requirement would assure that, say, Home Missions and CRWRC would recognize and work within the geographic regions drawn exactly the same way.

Canadian Ministries Director Ray Elgersma was a member of the study committee which brought the restructuring report. He told delegates that synod's rejection of that package would leave Canadian ministries in a position that would make "arriving at our hoped for outcomes much more difficult."

Synod recognized that the structural changes adopted for Canada in 1997 presumed changes in U.S. structure this year. Its solution was to "instruct" the Board of Trustees to make recommendations to next year's synod regarding "adjustment to the Canadian governance structure required for effective binational ministry." (Such adjustments would have come about immediately under the study committee's plan.)

## From committees to corporation: A brief history of 'restructuring'

Marian Van Til

The Christian Reformed Church began in 1857. As it grew and initiated such work as foreign and domestic missions, a college and seminary, relief work, a publishing arm, a radio (then television) ministry, and others, committees were formed to oversee the accomplishing of this work done. These committees eventually turned into agencies, each with its own director — World Missions, Home Missions, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC), The Back to God

## A step back

Elgersma told CC that he is disappointed the restructuring won't happen as the study committee recommended. "We feel this is a step back from where we were going," he said. "[Their plan] made sense to me from an organizational perspective. It seemed very logical.



William Weidenaar

even though long and complex. I think it would have been a common-sense approach to managing ministry in a binational church."

Shirley Roels, an academic dean at Calvin College, was facilitator of the study committee, and was specifically singled out and thanked by synod for her yeoman work with the committee. "I don't think people 'own' the depth of the difficulties [in co-ordinating and co-operation between church agencies, etc.]," she said. "It was too much for synod to digest. But I don't blame synod."

Hour, etc. — which is still the case. As the church grew, its original structure was pushed, pulled and adapted, not always with good results, to try to accommodate a larger size and new ministries.

While in Reformed church polity the local congregation is the "original authority," classes (plural of "classis," equivalent to a diocese or presbytery) are a way for congregations within a region to work together in advancing the church's ministry, and an annual general synod, with authority

Continued on page 15...



## Synod

# Ordination and ministry acts need more study:

Bert Witvoet

ANCASTER, Ont. — Synod was not ready to adopt a fifth office (ordained position) in the Christian Reformed Church even though several overtures (Classis Red Mesa, Classis Alberta North and the Youth Ministries Committee) had asked for it. The CRC currently recognizes four offices: pastor, evangelist, elder and deacon.

Instead synod sent the report back to its study committee, which had recommended adding two new positions: the ordained position of a minister of education and the non-ordained position of an associate in educational ministry. It added three members to the committee and asked it to report to Synod 2001.

Had synod followed the advice of its study committee, it would have created the following positions and requirements:

A minister of education must possess an M.A. degree in educational ministry from an accredited college or seminary, have a call from a CR congregation in a youth/educational ministry and sustain a classical examination. Such a minister may extend the salutation and benediction when leading worship services, officiate at marriages and receive into the membership of the church through profession of faith. But he or she may not administer the sacraments or lead the excommunication ceremony.

The non-ordained associate in educational ministry needs to com-



Will these elders be able to administer the sacraments?

plete 18 months of demonstrated competence in youth/educational ministries in a CRC and show evidence of having completed five Continuing Education Units in educational ministry, receive a call and sustain a classical examination. Such a person is not allowed to perform any "official acts of ministry."

Synod's advisory committee thought, however, that "the relationship between office and ordination and 'official acts of ministry' calls for much more study." The advisor committee had reservations about adding two new positions "without a more fully developed framework for relating ordination to staff ministries and 'official acts of ministry.'"

## Red Mesa's need

Synod furthermore extended the exception to Church Order Article 55 given to Classis Red Mesa at previous synods, allowing those who have been authorized to preach to administer the sacraments at least until the study committee will complete its work.

Classis Red Mesa, which is made up of small mostly native churches (the average number of families is 26) experiences a somewhat permanent shortage of ordained ministers. In fact, many churches in this classis seem to be moving toward appointing bivocational ministers, persons who have a paying job in addition to their pastoral work.

Because of that, Classis Red Mesa had overruled Synod 1995 to

change Church Order Article 55 to read: "The sacraments shall be administered upon the authority of the consistory, in the public worship service, by those who have been properly authorized to bring the Word, with the use of the prescribed forms." Synod 1995 granted Classis Red Mesa a three-year exception to Church Order Article 55 and Synod 1998 extended that exception for one more year.

## Marching orders

Armed with new questions (see sidebar), the continuing and augmented study committee was given the mandate to continue their work and in addition "define the essence and nature of 'official acts of ministry,' exploring the relationship between 'official acts of ministry' and the nature and function of office and ordination, identifying practical implications for church ministry today, providing guidelines to help the church deal with matters of ordination and office, being sensitive to the various cultural and ethnic communities in which our churches minister."

## Pertinent questions

Synod's advisory committee came with lots of questions regarding ordination and "official acts of ministry" (such acts as extending the greeting and benediction, administering the sacraments, lead an excommunication service, install office bearers, preaching). These are their questions:

\*What acts of worship and

ministry call for ordination and why?

\*Who should be ordained and why?

\*What is the relationship between ordination and a person's spiritual gifts, God's call and the church's need?

\*What is the basis for the academic standards maintained for some but not other offices?

\*How can we define and specify the "official acts of ministry"?

\*May the church create and terminate offices at will? Why? How?

\*Ought elders in churches without pastors preach and administer the sacraments?

\*What is the ecclesiastical status of non-ordained persons who in various ways serve in congregational ministries, such as worship and music leadership, youth work, evangelism, church administration, congregational life, counseling, pastoral care and chaplaincies?

\*What is the difference between ordination, commissioning and appointing of staff?

\*How can the needs of the organized and unorganized churches of Classis Red Mesa be met by bivocational pastors?

\*How can the recommendation that licensed exhorters in Classis Red Mesa be ordained as elders apply to an unorganized church setting and within the context of limited tenure provisions in our current church polity?

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delegated to it by the combined local congregations, makes decisions by which (in the best of times, anyway) the entire church agrees to abide.

As the CRC grew, its organizational structure gradually became more complicated. It also became apparent that someone — or, more along the lines of Reformed polity, some *body* — was needed to address various issues which the church could not ignore in the whole year between synod meetings. So a "Synodical Interim Committee" (SIC) was given that authority, acting on behalf of synod in conducting immediate church business.

Over the years conflicts developed between how business was carried out in the various church agencies, particularly when there were overlapping concerns, as

there were (and are) between the CRWRC and World Missions.

## Ministry management

In the 1980s, originally to address such conflicts and improve collaborative efforts between World Missions and CRWRC, synod set in motion the restructuring process which is continuing now. Synod 1984 appointed the first committee to review the denomination's organizational structure. Later called the "Vision 21 Committee," this group reported to Synod 1987, which approved a new structure that included a Board of World Ministries (initially to co-ordinate the work and roles of World Missions and CRWRC). A few years later, a synod advisory committee, using the Vision 21 report, came up with recommendations of its own, which Synod 1990 adopted.

(Synod delegates are assigned to one of a number of "advisory committees," each of which deals with a particular subject or related subjects and gives advice — via written reports on those subjects — to the synod as a whole so that delegates can properly deliberate and make informed decisions.)

It was decided to expand the SIC's role, to create a "ministry management team" from among the heads of the agencies, and to hire an executive director to implement SIC decisions. By 1992 this led to the hiring of an executive ministries director of ministries (Dr. Peter Borgdorff) and the beginning of the transformation of the SIC into a Board of Trustees (BOT). By 1996 a constitution and bylaws were approved for the BOT, and it was given authority not just as a co-ordinating or advisory body, but as the "designated

governance body for the denomination between meetings of synod" (*Agenda for Synod 1999*, p. 314).

## Unworkable merger

Along the way, other substantial changes have been made. In 1992, five separate agencies — Abuse Prevention, Chaplaincy, Disability Concerns, Race Relations and Pastor-Church Relations — came together under a Pastoral Ministries Board and merged into one Pastoral Ministries agency. It became apparent rather quickly that this merger was not at all workable, and after a mere seven years, this year's synod was asked to approve the Pastoral Ministries Board's own decision to disband itself.

In 1997, synod had adopted significant changes for the structure of the Canadian wing of the

denomination, among which were the disbanding of the Council of CRCs in Canada, the hiring of a director of Canadian Ministries (Ray Elgersma), and changes in the way the church agencies (chief among them, World Missions, Home Missions and CRWRC) relate to each other and the Canadian churches. Implicit in those changes was an assumption that the structure of the American majority of the church also needed, and would undergo, revamping.

Since Synod 1999 has not approved such a structural change for the American part of the church, the BOT, in consultation with the Canadian Ministries Board, will come up with a plan to most effectively govern the binational Christian Reformed Church in North America.



## Summer story

## Flight

Quan Zhang

For four days, Yao Lusheng and two fellow villagers had crisscrossed fields and hills around villages and communes, moving stealthily towards a small southern border town called Chegongmiao in Bao An county, Guangdong province. The town was right on the northern edge of Hau Hoi Wan or Deep Bay. Four miles across the bay was Tsim Bei Tsui, a mudflat fishing settlement in the New Territories under Hong Kong's jurisdiction.

This was Yao Lusheng's second attempt to flee to Hong Kong. A year earlier, in July 1973, he and four young men from the same village had attempted to cross the border by land at a point between Shenzhen, on the China side, and Man Kam To. In preparation, he and his friends had found out in great detail, from other friends, the location and size of the militia and patrol troops living or stationed in each village, commune and town between Sha Ping, their home village, and Shenzhen, fifty miles to the south. They'd made their own map. They'd even made their own compasses out of razor blades and brass buttons.

That night in late July, they'd crawled through miles of marshland and rice paddies to get near the border. It was almost eerie how similar that night was to this one. In the silent, oppressive heat, all they could hear was the croaking of frogs in the fields. That night, they'd almost reached the six-foot, barbed wire fence. They could see the sentry posts about fifty metres apart, and a watchtower in the distance with powerful searchlights mounted on top. It was after midnight. Just as they'd started to crawl out of a ditch and move towards the barbed wire wall a pack of snarling police dogs had suddenly rushed out at them from nowhere. Yao Lusheng heard a snarl close by, but before he could run, a guard dog had sunk its teeth into his right buttock. The sudden, searing pain had shot through and paralyzed him. One villager had been bitten so badly that his left fibula was broken.

Yao Lusheng and his fellow villagers were rounded up, bound and hauled off to military barracks near Shenzhen, where they were imprisoned for a month before being escorted back to Sha Ping, their home village. They were publicly denounced at a meeting on the threshing grounds in the village.



Yao Lusheng saw the massive, rolling darkness of Deep Bay. Deep Bay had served as the route of escape for so many Chinese. And many had never made it to the other side.

As the leader of the runaways and a bad influence, Yao Lusheng had been put under 24-hour surveillance in a dark hut for a week, after which he did two months of forced labor. He was twenty-two years old.

This time, Yao Lusheng had decided to try crossing by water. During the month he'd spent in Shenzhen's military barracks, he'd learned a lot from other captured runaways. He'd learned that the best and the most dangerous route to Hong Kong was by water and that choosing the right time and the right point of departure was of utmost importance. To avoid the sharks in the bay, summer was the best time. Timing was important, too, to avoid being carried to the sharp-shelled oyster beds on the Hong Kong side and, especially, to avoid being swept out by the tides into open seas. When Yao Lusheng was finally released from his two-month sentence of forced labor that year, summer was already over. Autumn was the season for sharks in the bay.

Yao Lusheng had waited quietly for Summer 1974. He knew it was his last chance to make the crossing, for he'd heard that the Hong Kong government was going to close its borders to refugees from China at the end of that summer. It was now August 2, 1974.

**They'd been hiding** behind shrubs at the foot of a hill, waiting for night to come. All day,

it had been unbearably hot and humid. They'd tried to travel light, carrying only canteens of water and some fried, sweetened flour which, with a little water, could be made into an edible paste. Now, after four days, they were almost at the end of their supplies and everyone was exhausted.

None of this worried Yao Lusheng. What troubled him most, at the moment, was the size of his group. The previous night, they'd run into another group of three, including a girl from a village in a neighboring commune. They, too, were heading for the same stretch of water. Together, they could become an easy target. But it was everyone's last chance, so they'd decided to stick it out together. Yao Lusheng now wondered if they'd made the right decision.

The short, skinny girl worried him a lot. Could she survive the long swim through Deep Bay's treacherous waters? Yao Lusheng wasn't even sure he himself could make it, and he was strong and used to hard work. But the last four days on the road had taken their toll.

Finally, it was dark. The air was still hot and oppressive as the frogs began to croak. A light wind rose, rustling through the leaves of the shrubs that hid them at the foot of a low ridge of hills. Yao Lusheng smelled the ocean. One more hour and they'd be by the seashore. Then, if they were lucky enough, they would all be on the other side

of the bay by morning.

Yao Lusheng moved forward quickly and quietly in a crouch, through the shrubs and the darkness. He was grateful for the gentle swishing of the wind through the shrubs. But as he moved he became aware of sounds on the hilltop. People were walking along the ridge, about fifty feet above them. He heard his companions pushing forward through the shrubs. It was too late to warn them.

"There's someone down there in the shrubs, Captain!" A man with a nervous voice called out in alarm. From the hilltop, another man's voice, tense and harsh, shouted, "Stop where you are! Don't move if you want to live!" Yao Lusheng heard the clicks of safety bolts being pulled on rifles. "Come out with your hands above your heads! Don't try anything smart," shouted the same harsh voice.

Yao Lusheng's heart sank. It had happened. It had happened again. His throat burned, and he began to tremble. His legs refused to move. He tried to think, as powerful flashlights swept across the shrubs covering him.

"Listen here! If you don't come out, we're going to start shooting. At the count of five." The man paused. He began to shout "One! Two! Three! Four!"

"Wait a second, Sir!" A girl's voice burst out from the shrubs behind Yao Lusheng. Under the flashlights, the short, skinny girl

who'd joined Yao Lusheng's group the previous night, moved sideways, out into a clearing. She turned to face the flashlights. Yao Lusheng noticed how young and frail she looked. With her hair in short pigtails, and with a worn-out, green cloth schoolbag and a canteen slung across her pale blue blouse, she looked like a middle school student out on a picnic. Slowly, the girl walked a few steps towards the lights. Suddenly, with the flashlights trained on her, she knelt down on the ground.

"Elder Brothers, Elder Sisters," she said. "Please, give us this last chance. If we had any other way, we wouldn't be doing this. Please, let us go. Have pity on us." She started to cry. Yao Lusheng was taken aback. Everyone was surprised.

"Captain! What's going on here?" said the nervous, young man near the flashlights. "How many are there? We're not going to kill these people, are we?"

"Shut up! Who said we're going to kill them?"

The girl raised her face to the lights, closed her eyes and began to recite something in Cantonese that sounded vaguely familiar to Yao Lusheng.

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

"She's cursing us, Captain!" said a rude, male voice on the hill.

"She's a witch. She'll bring bad luck," said another voice.

"Let them go, Captain," said the nervous young man. "We don't need bad luck."

"I'll be damned. This is the weirdest night in my life," said the Captain.

"Please let us go, kindhearted Captain," continued the girl. "The Lord in Heaven will remember all your good deeds tonight."

"Listen here! All of you!" said the Captain. "Leave all your valuables on the spot where the flashlights are."

The girl stood up and quickly removed her bag and canteen, placing them on the ground in the oval of light made by the flashlights.

"Empty out your bag," said the Captain.



The girl turned her bag inside out, and a towel, a comb, some bean cakes and a few Chinese yuan tumbled out. She left her bag on the ground near her belongings. Yao Lusheng came out of hiding and did the same. One by one, they surrendered their trifle of belongings, including some leftover food, a couple of old watches and even some Hong Kong dollars. They kept only their inflatable plastic pillows.

The Captain and two other men came down to the edge of the clearing. Yao Lusheng could tell that they were the People's Militia, young fishermen on patrol from the local villages. The men cast a quick glance at the objects on the ground as the Captain shone his flashlight on Yao Lusheng's group. He looked from the girl to Yao Lusheng and back to the girl.

"Listen here," he said, at last. "Go that way." He pointed off towards their left. "You'll come to a small path. Follow it. It'll take you straight to the beach. That's the quickest way. Now get out of here!"

"Thank you, Elder Brothers. Captain. Thank you, and bless you." The girl turned quickly, followed by Yao Lusheng and the others.

**Yao Lusheng could not believe** what had just happened. As they moved quietly and swiftly through the shrubs towards the footpath, he half feared the militiamen on the hill might still open fire. But they didn't, and Yao Lusheng was left to wonder at the young girl in front of him. And at their escape. He racked his brains, trying to recall where he'd heard the poem she'd recited.

"Wenlan, you saved our lives tonight," said one of the young villagers who'd joined Yao Lusheng's group the previous night. He moved past Yao Lusheng to catch up with the girl.

So, her name was Wenlan, thought Yao Lusheng. Quietly, he walked behind them.

"No, Brother Liang. I just did what Sister Ah Fong told me to do. She said if I could remember those words by heart, I'd be all right," said the girl.

"Well, those words of hers certainly saved us tonight," said Brother Liang.

"They aren't her words. They're from Psalm 23 in the Bible."

All of a sudden, Yao Lusheng remembered. It was years ago,



*A Chinese family waits to get past the Hong Kong border*

when the Cultural Revolution had just started. He was 15 then. He'd barely dared to look at the scene. His second uncle was beating his white-haired, great-aunt in front of a crowd in the courtyard of her apartment complex in Canton. His uncle tried to make her renounce her faith and burn her Bible. When she refused, he pushed her down on a pile of crushed glass and forced her to kneel there. The frail old lady was wearing an old, black silk skirt with tiny, bright red, embroidered flowers around the pockets. Yao Lusheng could still see the blood, red like the flowers, flowing from her bare knees onto the glass. And he remembered that she had repeated words like the ones Wenlan had just recited moments ago.

"Maybe we should remember those words, too," said Brother Liang, interrupting Yao Lusheng's thoughts.

"Maybe they'll help us to get across the Bay," said someone else behind Yao Lusheng.

So Wenlan taught them the words of the psalm, and Yao Lusheng, along with everyone in the group, tried to remember them.

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads*

*me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul.*

Yao Lusheng felt comfort in the words, which took his mind off of the formidable swim ahead of them.

The footpath they were following suddenly disappeared. Over a stretch of sand dunes under a cloud-laden sky, flecked here and there with a star, Yao Lusheng saw the massive, rolling darkness of Deep Bay. He heard the crashing of waves along the shore. Deep Bay had served as the route of escape for so many Chinese. And many had never made it to the other side.

As Yao Lusheng gazed at its broad expanse, a chill crept up his back. He took a deep breath. He remembered that his father had asked him not to go. But they both knew that the alternative was only despair. Now he wondered if he'd ever see his family and friends again. Even if he did survive, he knew that the chances of a reunion were slim.

Silently, they all got ready. Each had brought an inflatable plastic pillow. After making sure that his own was properly inflated and secured, Yao Lusheng quietly helped and checked the others. It was time to go.

one noticed that Yao Lusheng had slipped off his sandals and left them on the beach. He wanted to swim without the encumbrance. In contrast to the hot and heavy night air, the water had a cool bite that seemed almost chilly as they were first swept into the furrowed sea. The salty waves, however, seemed less of a threat in the bay than near the shore. The swimmers struck out towards the lights across the bay, floating with the tide, on their pillows, when they were tired. Brother Liang took the lead, and Yao Lusheng more or less covered the rear.

Half an hour passed. It started to rain.

"What shall we do, Lusheng?" asked Yan San, a fellow villager. He was only a yard ahead. Yan San was a good swimmer, but Yao Lusheng knew that the boy had thought of the journey only as an adventure, a chance, maybe, to strike it rich in Hong Kong. His family was so poor, and he was a quick-witted, self-confident boy. But Yan San hadn't fully considered the dangers of the swim. Now Yao Lusheng could hear the little tremor of fear in his voice.


"The rain is good for us," said Yao Lusheng. "We'll be less visible to patrol boats."

The drizzle turned into a shower, and the sea began to get rougher. With each surge of the tide, they were carried to the crest like little sampans, sliding down into a furrow only to be lifted again. Yao Lusheng felt a heaviness in his arms, as it became harder and harder to move forward. It was too early to be tired. For some reason, the frail figure of Wenlan came into his mind. He tried to locate her among his companions on the tossing waves. The rain obscured his vision and...

*Continued on page 18.*

"Remember, you're not alone," said Yao Lusheng, turning towards his companions. It was the first time he'd opened his mouth in hours. "Stick together and keep your eyes focused on the lights across the bay. Don't push too hard; you'll just get exhausted. And whatever happens, don't panic." Yao Lusheng stopped. It took a few seconds for everyone to realize that he wasn't going to say anything more.

**One by one, they stepped** into the dark water. No

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## Summer story/Column

## Flight

— continued from page 17

darkened an already dark night.

Then, out of the darkness, nearby and to his left, Yao Lusheng heard the girl's soft voice. She was reciting Psalm 23 again. Everyone soon joined her. They could hardly see each other, but by reciting the psalm together they felt a moment of shared comfort and protection. Yao Lusheng admired the girl's quiet strength.

When the shower stopped, the waves seemed to grow calmer. Judging the distance from the lights on both shores, Yao Lusheng figured that they had passed the international boundary, which meant they were on the Hong Kong side of the water and halfway through the journey. But he kept quiet.

It wasn't time to celebrate yet. He'd heard too many stories in the Shenzhen barracks. One of his fellow prisoners had made it halfway across the bay with a friend when they were attacked by sharks. Despite a torrential downpour, a patrol helicopter from Hong Kong had spotted them and come to the rescue, but just as it had pulled the



The Mai Po marshes of Hong Kong's Deep Bay.

man out of the water, he saw his friend being torn apart by the sharks in a sea of red. Because of the rain, the pilot had made a quick landing on the wrong side. Hours later, the pilot was allowed to fly back to Hong Kong, but the runaway was thrown into the detention camp at Shenzhen.

"Help, something bit me!" Yao Lusheng heard Yan San's cry. The whole group stopped swimming.

Straining his eyes in the direction of the cry, Yao Lusheng

noticed that there was no turbulence in the water. He swam quickly over to Yan San.

"Are you all right, Yan San?"

"Something bit me on my right leg. It hurts badly." Yan San started to cry.

"Don't panic. Hold on to your pillow for a while," said Yao Lusheng.

Yao San cried even harder. Yao Lusheng realized, then, that Yan San had lost his plastic pillow. Yao Lusheng unfastened his own, and handed it to the boy.

"Here, hold on to this, Yan San. What happened to your leg?"

"Something floated by, and all of a sudden I felt a shooting pain in my leg," said Yan San, holding firmly to the pillow Yao Lusheng had given him. "I thought it was a shark!"

"You wouldn't be here talking to me if it were. It was probably just a jellyfish. You'll be O.K."

Yao Lusheng was relieved. It wasn't time for the sharks, but you could never tell for sure. Of course, he'd heard that some jellyfish stings could be fatal, but Yan San seemed to be all right. The group once again struck out towards their goal, floating for longer periods of time, now, in their weariness. Yan San shared the pillow with Yao Lusheng.

As they swam and then bobbed up and down like driftwood, a heavy layer of pre-dawn fog dropped from nowhere, clinging to the surface of the water. The swimmers could no longer see the lights ahead on the shore. They began to lose their sense of direction. Yao Lusheng didn't know what to do. Mechanically, he tailed behind the group. They'd made it so far. He couldn't bear to think of the consequences of missing the shore, or by some horrible twist, circling back to China.

Wenlan's voice then came  
Concluded on page 19.

## Intangible things

Heidi VanDerSlikke



## Living a full life

Have you ever noticed that so much of life can be categorized as either full or empty? Think about it. The laundry hamper - full, toilet paper roll - empty; trash can - full; refrigerator - empty; kitchen sink - full; gas tank - empty; unpaid bill box - full; bank account - empty. You get the picture.

In churches of the Reformed persuasion I have observed that people work very hard to keep their personal calendars full, as do I. Don't misunderstand me, I always admire the diligence and commitment our people put forth to accomplish the work of churches, schools and agencies like the Christian Farmers' Federation or CPJ. What amuses me is the dogged determination with which we book activities into every waking hour, every night of the week.

Sit in any room with Reformed people and try to set a date for anything. They immediately respond by producing their date books, like movie FBI agents flashing their badges. You can tell a lot about a person by his or her day minder. For instance, there are the well-worn, dog-eared ones that belong to the non-materialistic, hard workers; the pretty Hallmark kind, with butterflies and Helen Steiner Rice verses indicates a sensitive, artsy-type owner, some with Post-It flags stuck here and there, are the property of people who are not only conscientious, but well-organized; and for the high-tech personality there's the computerized datebook. One thing they have in common as with Bingo cards their owners aren't satisfied until every space is full.

## 'Christian' busyness?

After the flurry of datebooks hitting the table subsides, negotiations begin. On Monday somebody has an education committee meeting; Tuesday, someone else has catechism to teach; Wednesday, council meeting; Thursday, Gems; and on Friday there's a special spring concert at school. Finally a date is set somewhere in the next fiscal quarter, and everyone happily fills in another meeting on his or her calendar. There is an awareness that something momentous has been accomplished.

I don't want to sound as if I'm complaining, because our family has certainly reaped the benefits of innumerable hours of volunteer work. But while all of this assiduous planning is a major strength of our denominations, it also has a downside. In the midst of this dedicated Christian busyness, we may seriously deplete the time we have available to spend together as family. Even personal time for quiet contemplation and devotions becomes scarce. This is ironic considering that our churches, schools and social organizations were designed with the intent of enhancing Christian family life and promoting healthy spiritual growth by means of focusing on God himself. We sometimes need to be reminded that balance is an important element of a well rounded lifestyle.

That takes us back to *empty* and *full*. As I anticipate the next couple of summer months I am thankful for an emptier schedule. I look forward to filling my senses with the beauty of God's presence. And I will try to keep in mind that the fullness of his inexhaustible love is portrayed by an empty cross and an empty tomb.

Heidi VanDerSlikke lives in Harrison, Ont., and enjoys writing.

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## Summer story

## Flight

*continued from page 18*


through the silky veil. Everyone joined her. For the first time, Yao Lusheng seriously recited the psalm, and prayed that whoever controlled his life would spare him and give him a chance to start a new life. Psalm 23 was no longer something simply poetic and comforting. For Yao Lusheng it seemed to be the language of counsel and direction. He followed the sound of the recitation and swam. And, for the first time, he felt oddly calm and without fear. Gradually, the sky began to lighten, and the fog to curl upwards off the water's surface.

"We've made it! We've made it!" Brother Liang was shouting. Yao Lusheng strained his eyes. He saw Brother Liang standing, waist-high in the water against some dim lights along the shore. Like everyone else, Yao Lusheng put his feet down to touch land. Something sharp cut his bare feet. They'd landed on a stretch of oyster beds. The shore was only a couple of hundred yards away, but they had to cross over the sharp edges of vertically planted oyster shells. Yao Lusheng regretted that he'd discarded his sandals. Now he crept over the oyster beds on his hands and knees, floating while he could until the water was too shallow and he had to stand up. The salty water worsened the pain of each new cut on his feet.

By the time Yao Lusheng made it to the shore, his hands, feet and legs were covered with bleeding cuts. Despite the pain, he was happy. They'd made it to this side of the world. It was the beginning of a new life.

A couple of seagulls greeted the newcomers, circling above them and screaming noisily. The swimmers spoke to each other in hushed voices in this new world. After a little rest, Yao Lusheng was helped to his feet by Yan San and Brother Liang. As dawn broke, the six survivors of the sea walked towards a mudflat fishing village nearby.

*Quan Zhang grew up in Beijing and received his M.A. in American literature from the University of Keele in England and his Ph.D. in American studies from the University of Maryland. He has published several short stories and has completed a novel. He lives in Seattle, Washington.*



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## Comment

## Losing passion – or just maturing?

*Dear Elizabeth,*

It's been a quiet week here in Korea. While students have been studying for exams, teachers have hunkered down in their offices to grade final quizzes and assignments.

All this silence has me thinking. I hit 30 in February, an event which wasn't as difficult as it was epiphanic. I realized just how much I've changed in the last few years. I'm more conservative and cautious. I'm more group-oriented. I'm more patient with people I don't like. I even entertain thoughts of marriage and fatherhood. Kierkegaard would say I've moved from the "pleasure-seeker" to the "ethical" phase of life. To a certain degree, I'm proud of this development.

But sometimes I wonder if this is what I really want. Is this slide into a world of convention a natural occurrence, or am I fooling myself? What if I'm still the idealist I was 10 years ago? Would I be honest with myself if I smiled and nodded when I should have growled and barked; saved when I should have given away, "settled for" marriage instead of waiting for that well-wrought soulmate?

My second greatest fear is that the pleasures of conventional life will cause me to forget what it is I really want. My greatest fear is that I'll sell out, then wake up one morning only to realize that I did. Do you catch what I'm getting at?

✉ ✉ ✉

*Dear Dirk,*

Yeah – you're over the hill, you want to settle down, and you think you're going to miss out on some fun if you do.

Truthfully, Dirk, I'm not sure I do follow you. If you don't want to get married, then don't. Especially if you think it's a matter of "settling." And I don't understand why you think idealism and conventionality are incompatible, or that marriage isn't for idealists. I think you're going to have to help me out here.

*Elizabeth*

✉ ✉ ✉

*Elizabeth,*

I agree. Idealism and conventionality don't have to be incompatible. But I think there's a danger that the two can easily become that. When you settle down you gain responsibilities you will protect, at times at the expense of something – maybe even your belief system. But that's not exactly what I'm getting at. I'm talking about losing something – an edge, a fire, a healthy form of cockiness that kept you idealistic in the first place – and realizing that you're losing it.

From the sounds of it, Elizabeth, we haven't shared the same experience in this regard.

I should clarify. Seven years ago, I couldn't care less about money. These days, I have to force myself to stop thinking about mutual funds. Seven years ago, I believed in "Truth," that it could be spotted and captured, then placed into a metaphysical glass container.

These days, I rarely argue with someone who thinks differently than I do. I'm always ready to take into consideration his or her environment and history. Sure, I'll go at it for a while, but the willingness to make an ass out of myself for the sake of my point has disappeared. By the time we're ready to close our conversation, I'm thinking about lunch.

There's a pastor at our church who's not exactly "thorough" in his sermon preparation. A few years ago I would have been in his face. These days I worry about offending him, hurting his ego. I try to rationalize why we should just let it slide. I know there's a solution to each individual situation I've mentioned, but that's not my point. My point is that something's going on in my head. Things are slowing down.

Okay, idealism and conventionality don't have to be incompatible. But some of my married buddies, from the way they live, show me the opposite. The fire in their eyes is gone. They don't have the zest they had before. They say things like, "One of these days, Dirk, you'll understand" as if there's a secret out there I haven't discovered. Any thoughts? This was a stream-of-consciousness piece, so be nice!

*Dirk*

✉ ✉ ✉

*Dirk,*

Be nice, he says. Dirk, I'm only beginning to know you, and I don't know what you were like seven years ago, but from your description, it sounds like you're much easier to get along with now. That's not so bad, is it?

I'm afraid I don't really understand what you're talking about. For myself, I am probably more on fire than I've ever been and the energy and passion continues to grow each year. You say there's something going on in your head and things are slowing down. Do you have an idea why it's happening? It must be more than the turn of a decade, no?

*Elizabeth*

✉ ✉ ✉

*Elizabeth,*

Yeah, I know what's going on. As you said earlier, I'm getting older. All I'm saying is that I'm insecure with some of the changes age has brought me. Do I want to be easy-going and amiable? Sometimes. But there are also times when I wish I could stay passionate and energetic. Why? Because in the long run you do more good being passionate and energetic. Sounds like you don't have this problem, Elizabeth. If your energy and passion levels grow with every year, you are a fortunate person. I probably have a problem with consistency.

This discussion has me thinking of Scorsese's *Last Temptation of Christ*, in which Christ was



Elizabeth Salomons  
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Two  
Under  
35



Dirk Schouten  
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torn between choosing a "normal" life and staying committed to his mission. At the end of the film, he stumbles across a realization that, yes, he did stay committed to a quest. Theologically disturbing issues aside, I think Scorsese was tackling something very true and significant: people struggle with choices because they know they have to live with them.

*Dirk*

✉ ✉ ✉

*Dirk,*

Choices are what life's all about. I remember feeling bewildered when I finished college with the choices facing me. There were all these closed doors in front of me and I knew I could open any one of them, each one of which would be a different journey. It was frightening. At the time, I actually thought marriage would be an easy way out, because somebody else could then make all my decisions for me.

Fortunately, I realized before it was too late that that wasn't an honest choice and I've been on my own since, which, in hindsight, I now know was the best thing for me. This past decade has solidified for me who I am and where I'm going in a way I never thought possible. That's where the energy and passion come from – just being excited about what I've learned and how I can use my skills and talents to glorify God. And along the way I've been blessed with people and opportunities to help me in that journey of self-discovery. I've been blessed that way, and I don't for a second ever take any of it for granted.

*Elizabeth*

✉ ✉ ✉

*Elizabeth,*

I wasn't intending to make this a "To marry or not to marry" issue. Marriage is just one of the pieces of this puzzle. I think this boils down to Generation X anxiety. There's a lot more uncertainty in the world and uncertainty creates anxiety. I bought into postmodernism in a big way – it was interesting – and I wonder if I'm now reaping what I sowed.

What I don't want to do is become lazy, to simply go with the flow, do my little ditty and go home at 5 o'clock. But it's getting easier – and easier for me to do what everyone is doing; to be a consumer, to invest, to try to keep the peace rather than fight for what's truthful. Maybe we'll talk about this more in the future.

*Dirk*

✉ ✉ ✉

*Dirk,*

I don't know if you're just at a different phase than I am, or if you're wrestling with bigger choices than what I faced. But I do know this, as trite as it sounds: it always works out. I have found that even though the timing might not be of my own choosing, God always knows what I need when I need it. The trick is to learn to accept God's timing (I know, I know. This is easier said than done for impatient people like you and me.)

*Fill next time,  
Elizabeth*



## Advice

## Can I control what the church does with my money?

Dear P & M:

*Should a Christian Reformed Church member who is a conscientious objector to paying "ministry shares" via a church budget be excluded from serving as an officebearer? Since the CRC synod approved ordaining women and took what I believe is a liberal position in the creation debate, I no longer feel comfortable paying for institutions which no longer stand for what I believe. Instead, I now give money to other agencies.*

*I have asked my consistory to separate ministry shares from the budget and to treat them like collections for the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC). As an alternative, I have also asked them to pay Calvin College 75 per cent and the Back to God Hour 125 per cent, percentages which would better reflect the view of our congregation.*

*My suggestion has been tried elsewhere. For example, the United Way recently experienced a drop in donation income because of its support for abortions. Consequently, it gave people the option of designating the agency to which they prefer their money to go. As an other example, Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) members may also designate favorite charities as alternatives to paying union dues.*

*In due course I may have to leave the CRC, but I am trying to see if my denomination values diversity when it comes to financial matters.*

### Dear Conscientious Objector:

As an individual you have every right to give precise instructions as to where you wish your donations to go. Your own treasurer must respect your wishes and in that way your congregation can "value diversity when it comes to financial matters." Clearly indicate your instructions on your budget envelope.

Your congregation and council, on the other hand, are bound to abide by the decisions of ecclesiastical assemblies unless it is proved that they conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order (Article 29). Synod approves ministry-share assignments on a yearly basis for all the agencies that we together support as a denomination. Classical treasurers are informed, and regional classes hold each other accountable to raise the required funds through the budget of each individual church.

If a local congregation wants to protest a ministry share or request an exemption, it has to follow due process and overture its classis, or make a request by way of the credentials. Following this procedure avoids anarchy and individualism. We are, after all, interested in denominational unity as well as diversity.

Your letter begins by asking if a conscientious objector can still be an officebearer. We would say yes, provided that this conscientious objector expresses his opinion and formulates his appeals in

## Peter and Marja



are  
IN

ways that "observe all ecclesiastical regulations" (Church Order, Art. 30).

We hope that you will not leave the denomination. Neither of the issues you cite as a possible reason for leaving is a salvation issue. Both are "disputable matters" about which we should "stop passing judgment on one another" (Rom. 14:1,13). Please don't reject a whole institution like Calvin College or a whole denomination like the CRC just because there are some disputable matters which members see differently.

### Dear P & M:

Last Fall, in an issue of *CRC Source*, a publication that describes the work of the various agencies and ministries that the Christian Reformed Church supports, someone asked why the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) had never received ministry shares. To me, the following answer was unsatisfactory: "The annual financial needs of the CRC's relief and development ministry vary greatly depending on global factors beyond anyone's control." While appeals in connection with disasters make sense, this relief agency's ongoing tasks certainly deserve a ministry share as much as World Missions and Home Missions. Giving it a ministry share would also get rid of my perception that ministry to people's spiritual needs is more important than ministry to their physical needs.

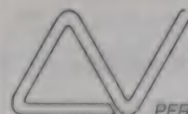
### Dear Ministry Share for the CRWRC:

We hope that your perception is off base. Every CRC agency ministers to the whole human being. We can't imagine that the underlying objection to giving ministry shares to the CRWRC is a bias against a ministry that, by definition, targets physical needs occasioned by horrendous disasters. Isn't it possible that there is a simpler and more innocent answer, namely, that the response to disaster relief requests is always so overwhelming that ministry shares are just not required?

While we question your analysis, we do agree with your suggestion. The CRWRC should get a ministry share for its ongoing tasks. It will take an overture by a local council to a regional classis to accomplish this and you may well be the person to initiate this process.

Write to: P & M, 16 Kimberrmount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6.

*Peter and Marja Sijstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Alan Vandermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Wuvot.*



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## News Comment

## Nose for News



Bert Hielema

A YEAR OR SO AGO, I attended a conference in the Sisters of Providence House in Kingston, Ontario, a retirement residence for Roman Catholic nuns. Little did I realize that colleagues of these gracious ladies would serve a useful purpose, even in their death. I am referring to a study done involving the brains of deceased nuns, which were used in trying to find a cause for Alzheimer's.

When the researchers picked these brains and peeked into the substance that made these nuns function, they discovered a link between that dreaded degenerative brain disorder and the lack of a simple ingredient called folic acid. TV watching has nothing to do with it.

We all know people who suffer from Alzheimer's and the burden they are to their immediate family and society at large. To avoid such an undignified end, take folic acid in tablet form and also vitamin B, or simply deal with it naturally through a diet of plenty of beans and leafy green vegetables.

This same article also says that folic acid is an effective antidote for breast and colon cancer. Because of this, both "being on acid" and "picking one's brains" take on new meaning! Consequently, the convents in which these sisters lived, and many other such places as well, now have copious salad bars for themselves and their guests.

This incident reminds me of a booklet I have on humor from the Dutch province of Groningen (*Aargeloze Grunneger Humor*). Some years ago a doctor visited a patient who had a weight problem

because of his exclusive potato diet. The doctor told the man to eat more vegetables. The patient asked: "What sort of green stuff did you have in mind, Doctor?" The doctor's advice: "Spinach, endive, parsley, etc. That way you'll get iron in your body and you'll lose weight." The farmer's next question was: "When do want me to take this: before or after my meals?"

**WHEN IS NEWS important?** Apparently only when it happens in the West. In the past weeks there has been a heat wave in India which caused hundreds of people to die; fires have raged there in the tinder-dry mountains; water has been running short; farm animals have died of thirst; crops have been ruined. But because this is happening in India, it doesn't seem to be news here.

There have been mudslides in Colombia - 41 people died. In the Congo, 63 died from a killer fever, similar to ebola, which quickly ruins a person's intestines. In Mogadishu, 23 people have died in gang battles. Scores of people have also died in clashes in Aceh, Sumatra (already a trouble spot when the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina was the ruler there).

None of this has been reported in the main news sources. If 41 people - or even 10, or 5 - were to die in a mudslide in California or an avalanche in B.C. we would soon get to know about it.

Why do we focus on American, Canadian and (some) European news? One reason is that the victims are white and speak English. And, of course, it's much easier for

TV networks to cover news close at hand than far, far away. In Africa and Asia the situation is so troublesome, with constant clashes and seemingly insurmountable problems. So why bother?

**HERE IS A TREND** worth watching: some people - especially those in higher tax brackets - are pushing for the Canadian dollar to disappear and for the American dollar to become the official legal tender in Canada. A while ago, a vice president of Canada's biggest global company, Northern Telecom, made the remark that his company felt no particular allegiance to Canada and that, unless taxes are reduced, Canadian skilled workers would flood to the U.S. where payroll deductions are substantially lower.

Of course, hockey teams are advocating the same thing: their players are paid in U.S. dollars, and the weaker our looney is, the more it costs them. Toronto and Montreal can afford the expensive players, but cities such as Ottawa, Edmonton, Calgary, even Vancouver have a hard time financially.

Free trade started this all a decade ago, and now that NAFTA has been a success, the proponents of even freer trade are pushing for a total economic union with the U.S., pointing to Europe with its common currency. Gordon Thiessen, governor of the Bank of Canada, is flatly rejecting the idea of a common currency, which, of course, would make his job superfluous. Give it another 10 years, I'd say.

**BELGIUM SEEMS** to be able to produce only bad news. This small country, wedged between France and the Netherlands, has an uncanny talent for attracting scandal. A few years ago there was a cover-up involving the death of young girls who were kidnapped and sexually terrorized, the police ignored the problem. Last year Willi Claes, ex-deputy prime

minister, was convicted of bribery.

Now poisonous food is in the news. Somehow dioxin, one of the most deadly substances created by the chemical industry, has gotten into almost 200,000 pounds of animal feed, and through the food chain into butter, poultry, eggs, fatty beef and pork and all byproducts. All of these have been banned, leaving the Belgians with a pretty meager diet.

Butcher shops are closed, half the farms are quarantined, no animals or produce can be shipped, and many food-processing workers have been laid off. Countries all over the world have quickly banned imports from Belgium, even its world-famous chocolate. Both the health and the agriculture ministers resigned because they had known about the problem for a month without informing the public or the prime minister.

Another Belgian problem: a perennial language dispute even worse than that in Quebec. The Walloon portion of the country (French) is subsidized by the more prosperous Flemish region where there is a growing movement to separate and perhaps join their linguistic neighbors in the Netherlands.

**YET ANOTHER REASON** not to get so sick that hospitalization is needed: A recent *Globe and Mail* headline says that "Deadly 'superbugs' plague Canada's hospitals." Even places where a person is supposed to come to be cured are now dangerous. No wonder the World Health Organization reports that depression is the second greatest cause of death after heart disease in affluent Europe and North America, and it occupies first place in time lost and in medical expense, and 23 per cent of the disease burden.

**A GOOD-NEWS ITEM** which may have a double benefit. It sounds like fiction, but researchers say writing about stressful experiences can improve symptoms in rheumatoid arthritis and asthma patients, and that it can also influence depression favorably. People who write as little as 20 minutes a day for as short as three days, have a more than 50 per cent chance to experience positive effects that may last for months. More evidence that the mind plays an important role in chronic illnesses. The other benefit it may produce

that book you always wanted to write. Start writing today, even if you don't have any of these symptoms.

**THE SUN MAY BE** a problem soon. No, I don't mean the ultra-violet rays which are now being filtered less efficiently because of the disappearing ozone layer. I'm referring to the fact that our sun will soon begin one of its periodic fits of "solar flares," during which it releases astronomical amounts (pardon the pun) of energy, wreaking havoc in the heavens. According to a paper presented at the American Astronomical Society, the next peak is to occur in March 2000.

In earlier days this was not a noteworthy event, but in the last decade we have created quite a traffic problem in space. We have literally littered the skies with the satellites which make possible cellular phones, the WorldWide Web and TV reports from anywhere on our planet. These shiny human-made stars even regulate some of our electricity supply. Predictions are that the sun will throw a tantrum that will rank among the top five ever recorded, and may cause these expensive toys to tumble to earth.

The good news is that we will be able to see spectacular displays of the northern and southern lights to cheer up those who have lost their phone connections, their favorite TV programs and even their electricity supply.

**IN DOLLAR VOLUME**, guess which item we North Americans spend most of their money on when we go grocery shopping? Milk? Solid food, such as frozen dinners and meat pies? Cereals? Bread? No! The winner is colored sugar water, also known as pop. That's followed by milk, juices, meats and bread and cereals, then cheese and snack foods.

**DO YOU KNOW** what some parents give their daughters upon elementary school graduation? Breast implants. Well, what with fake drinks, fake wars and a fake economy, fake breasts are a perfect fit.

*Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ontario, from where he likes to think he brings you the true, unadulterated, perfectly pure and organic news, which is not refined or filtered or homogenized or in any way tampered with.*

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<p><b>As of May 1999:</b> Note: 7% GST will be added to all prices listed below.</p> <p><b>DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION</b> <i>Christian Courier</i> is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, eight business days prior to publication.</p> <p><b>RATES</b> The cost of advertising space is <b>\$14.00 per column inch (pci) of length</b>. (All columns are 2 inches wide.) This rate applies to all personal and family announcements as well as all other types of advertising, including multi-column display ads. Clients will be invoiced after publication.</p> <p><b>PHOTOS</b> There is a processing fee of \$25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged pci, but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original (which we will return) or a downloadable internet image.</p> <p><b>PERSONAL ADS</b> <i>Christian Courier</i> would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is \$35. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at \$15 per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.</p> <p><b>NEWLYWEDS &amp; NEW PARENTS</b> We offer a \$25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in <i>Christian Courier</i> AND to parents who announce the birth of a child in our paper. Please let us know when placing your ad that you want to take advantage of this offer.</p> <p><b>SUBMITTING YOUR AD</b> mail: <i>Christian Courier</i> #4 - 261 Martindale Road St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 fax: 905-682-8313 email: ccadpromo@aol.com</p> <p><b>OTHER INFORMATION</b> a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format. b) Please provide us with clear copy. <i>Christian Courier</i> is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.</p>	 <p>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Arthur &amp; Rita Fairchild of Newburg, Pa. and Rev. David &amp; Joanne Tigchelaar of Carleton Place, Ont., announce the engagement of their children,</p> <p><b>Sheryl Lynn Fairchild</b> and <b>David Allen Tigchelaar</b> They plan to be married July 24, 1999, in the Presbyterian Church in Shippensburg, Pa. "We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand." (Isaiah 64:8)</p>	<p>Groningen Guelph the Neth. Ont. 1954 July 9 1999 With thanks to God, on July 9, 1999, we joyfully celebrate the 45<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of</p> <p><b>HENK &amp; LENA OOSTERVELD</b> With lots of love from your children and grandchildren and from our special mother, oma and great-oma, Hendrika Pyper, The most important gift parents can give to their children is to love and honor each other. May you have many more years to share this gift with your family. From "The Kids." Address: Carters Rd., RR 2, Guelph, ON N1H 6H8</p>
	<p><b>Anniversaries</b></p> <p>Hollandscheveld London the Neth. Ont. 1944 May 28 1999 With joy and thankfulness to God we wish to inform you that our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents,</p> <p><b>HARM &amp; NELLIE BLOEMBERG</b> (nee VANDER POL) celebrated their 55<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." With love, Anne &amp; Sid Vander Heide - London, Ont. Yvonne &amp; John (Stephanie), Ron &amp; Karen, Jill, Jonathan Ralph &amp; Nancy Bloomberg - London, Ont. Martin &amp; Jo (Mitchell), Helen &amp; Scott (Nicholas), Michael, Jennifer Nela &amp; Mike Couchie - London, Ont. Sean &amp; Jackie, James, Thomas, Michael Cornie Bendall - London, Ont. Kirsten &amp; Andy, Matthew Margareth &amp; Roger Baker - Ailsa Craig, Ont. Timothy, Benjamin, Simon, Isaac Home address: 1 Andover Dr., Apt. 302, London, ON N6J 4H2</p>	<p><i>Congratulations to Henk &amp; Lena Oosterveld on their 45th wedding anniversary.</i></p> <p>Town of Mount Royal Westmount Que. Que. 1954 July 3 1999 With joy and thanksgiving to our heavenly Father, we are pleased to announce the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents</p> <p><b>FREDERICK &amp; MARTINA DROK</b> (nee VERMEY) Congratulations Mom and Dad. With all our love Dave &amp; Belinda Drok - Canton, Ohio We Love you Granny and Grandpa Kristen, Rachelle Home address: 4998 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W., #619, Westmount, PQ H3Z 1N2</p>
<p><b>Anniversary</b></p> <p>Toronto Rockwood Ont. Ont. 1959 June 26 1999 With thankfulness and joy, we hope to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of our parents, opa, and oma, <b>ARTHUR &amp; WILHELMINA DEGRAAF</b> (nee VANSANTEN) on June 26, 1999. Thank you, mom and dad, for all your love and prayers and your Christian example to us! We pray for joy and many blessings for you in the years to come. With love, Wilma Linda &amp; George DeVries Rebecca, Danielle, Peter, Rudy, Sarah, Grace Gary Mailing address: Box 208, Rockwood, ON N0B 2K0</p>	<p><b>Births</b></p> <p>The Lord is good. Our second grandchild, <b>VIRGINIA ANNE VAN OMMEN</b> was born on May 15, 1999, weighing 10 lbs. 5 oz. Parents: Ray &amp; Teresa Van Ommen, and big brother, David. Third grandchild for Neil &amp; Ken Parrish. Great-grandchild for Jake &amp; Bea Vanderkooy, Mrs. Ila Parrish, all of Guelph, Ont., and Mrs. Charlotte Stein of the Netherlands. Grandparents: Ben &amp; Willy Van Ommen, 83 Cedar St., Guelph, ON N1G 1C4</p>	<p>1949 June 24 1999 It is with joy and thanksgiving that we announce the 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, <b>ANTONIE &amp; SJOUKJE BOSMA</b> (nee DOLDERSUM) Congratulations, Mom and Dad, and may you be blessed with many more years together. Hieke Bosma Rob Ralph &amp; Carol Bosma Tara, Tyrone, Martin, Nathan, Anne Marie Ed Bosma Len &amp; Rita Bosma Amy, Julia Tony &amp; Joyce Bosma Christopher, Jeremy, Kimberley, Charmaine David Bosma Great-grandparents to Jordan Daniels. Please join us in celebrating at an open house on Saturday, June 26, 1999, at Ebenezer CRC, 18 Fourth Ave., Trenton, Ont. from 1-3 p.m. Best wishes only, please. Home address: R.R. 1, Trenton, ON K8V 5P4</p>
	<p><b>Note of Thanks</b></p> <p>We wish to express our appreciation to our children, family and friends for gifts, cards and best wishes on the occasion of our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Also, above all, thanks to our Heavenly Father for His many blessings. Jolie and Janny deVries, 795 John St. W., Listowel, ON N4W 1B6</p>	<p>Wellandport Hamilton Ont. Ont. 1958 July 17 1999 "Blessed be the Lord, for He has wondrously shown His steadfast love to us." (Psalm 31:21a) With joy and thankfulness to God, we hope to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents</p> <p><b>JACK &amp; HELEN HAGEN</b> (nee JANSSENS) Love and congratulations from your children and grandchildren: Vicky &amp; Gary vander Ham - Carleton Place Marlene &amp; Jeff Galilea - Hamilton Josh, Kasey, Jordan, Lisa Kevin &amp; Wendy Hagen - Ancaster Kristen, Michelle, Jody, Ashley Patti &amp; Andy de Haan - Ancaster Nathan, Amanda, Melissa Paul &amp; Nancy Hagen - Orangeville Jacob and Darynne An open house will be held on Saturday, July 17, 1999, from 1-4 p.m. at Hamilton District Christian High School. Home address: 337 Stonechurch Rd. E., Apt. 216, Hamilton, ON L9B 1B1</p>
		<p>Sassanheim Cambridge the Neth. Ont. 1959 July 14 1999 "If your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here." (Exodus 33:15b) With thankfulness and praise to God for his providence and love, we are happy to announce the 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents.</p> <p><b>CORNELIS "CASE" &amp; GRACE MEYER</b> (nee BOTER) We pray that the Lord continue to bless them and keep them in his care. With love and congratulations from Richard &amp; Margaret den Bok - Cambridge, Ontario Steven, Alison An open house will be held, D.V. on Saturday, July 17, 1999, from 2-4 p.m. at Marantha Christian Reformed Church, 94 Elgin St. S., Cambridge, Ont. Home address: 18 Barbary Pl., Cambridge, ON N1S 3P2</p>
		<p><b>Advertise in our monthly Business Directory for only \$25 plus GST.</b></p>



## Classifieds

## Anniversary



Best wishes to Daniel and Nan Doerksen on their 40th wedding anniversary.

Winnipeg Frederickton  
Man. N.B.  
1959 June 27 1999  
With praise and thanksgiving to God,  
we celebrate the 40th anniversary of  
our parents, grandpa and grandma:  
**DANIEL AND NAN DOERKSEN**  
(nee ENNS)

Thanks, Mother and Father, for your  
love, care and concern, and the good  
example you have been to us.

With love,  
Daniel  
Robert & Yuchu  
Rosalie  
Alan and Junko

### A Millennium of Grace!

The Bible League is committed to  
helping Russian Christians to  
share the gospel of hope. We  
assist in training local Christian  
workers and provide them with  
Scriptures that they use to start  
new churches.

The results are truly amazing!  
For more information on how you  
can provide for the on-going work  
of Bible placement as well as  
Estate or Will Planning, please call  
The Bible League at  
1-800-363-9673 (WORD).  
(In 1998, The Bible League placed  
25,621,283 Bibles in 85 countries.)



THE BIBLE LEAGUE  
of Canada  
PO Box 5037  
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8  
www.thebibleleague.ca

## Obituary

With sadness, the family announces  
the passing of

#### GEERT DOORNBOSCH

at St. Joseph's Health Centre. The  
Lord took him home on June 7, 1999,  
in his 83rd year. He leaves his loving  
and caring wife Geertje (Rosema) after  
57 years of marriage (April 30), two  
brothers and one brother-in-law and  
their families in the Netherlands.  
Pre-deceased by two brothers and  
one sister.  
Mourning his loss also, are his children:

Hilda & Stan Shepherd  
John & Dianne Doornbosch  
Jeannette & Steve Stellingwerf  
Nick & Willie Doornbosch  
Bob & Anne Doornbosch  
Halbe & Selma Doornbosch  
and their families, including 14 grandchildren,  
three granddaughters, six  
great-grandsons and a special niece,  
Marie, and her husband Harvey  
VanderWal and family.  
The service of "Celebration of Life"  
was at the Wyoming Christian Reformed  
Church with Rev. Ken  
Benjamins officiating on June 10,  
1999. He is interred at Beechwood  
Cemetery, Forest, Ont. As expressions  
of sympathy, memorial donations  
may be made to the Canadian  
Food Grains Bank or the Canadian  
Cancer Society (Cheques only  
please.)

## Vacations

Fully equipped luxury condominium  
at Cranberry Resort,  
Collingwood, Tennis, pools,  
beaches, golf, cycling, hiking and  
more. 2 bedrooms, sleeps 7  
\$600/week, \$300/weekend.  
In Niagara call 905-386-6976, or  
Toronto 905-877-0408.

## Anniversary



Congratulations to Robert (Bouwe) & Ann (Antje) Veenstra on their 60th wedding anniversary.

Ureterp Edmonton  
the Neth. Alta.  
1939 June 30 1999  
With great joy and thankfulness to  
God, we announce the 60th wedding  
anniversary, D.V. of our dear parents,  
grandparents and great-grand-  
parents:

#### ROBERT (BOUWE) & ANN (ANTJE) VEENSTRA (nee DROST)

We are truly blessed for the years  
God has given you to each other and  
to us. With our deepest love, from  
your children:

Froukje (t), John & Betty, Clarence &  
Joan, Flora & Rennie (t), Jack & Liz,  
Edie & Pete, Margaret & Armand  
Grandchildren:

Peter, Shane, Glorie, Anita, Jason,  
Chad, Rhonda, Jeremy, Nicole,  
Christy, Ryan, Kelly, Laura, Lee,  
Jessica, Travis, Leah, Clinton, Sarah  
and Dean.

Great-grandchildren:  
Devon, Kirstyn, Nicholas, Keanna,  
Casey & Kyle.

Open house: July 2, 1999, 8 p.m.  
NE Christian School, Edmonton, Alta.  
Home address: 12002 37 St.,  
Edmonton, AB T5W 2C3

## Obituary

Sept. 19, 1999 - May 26, 1999  
Emman Garden Hill  
the Neth. Ont.

#### HILLEGONDA KUIPERS (nee MOES)

was peacefully called home to the  
Lord in her 80th year. Mom rarely  
would sing in church, but when asked  
recently about what she was going to  
do when she got to heaven, she said,  
"with a sparkle in her eye, 'Sing!'"  
Her children, grandchildren, and  
great-grandchildren will miss  
Mom/Oma:

John & Hennie Kuipers  
Connie, Heather Kuipers & David  
Jonker (Naomi, Avni),  
Ronald & Ellen (Logan, Dryden)

Henry & Ginny Kuipers  
Darlene (Scott)  
Harmine Kuipers & Michael Deadman  
Shannon

and also survived by her sister Riek  
Wesseling from Brampton, and her  
brother Rieks Moes in the Netherlands,  
and many nieces and  
nephews.

"Surely goodness and love will follow  
me all the days of my life, and I will  
dwell in the house of the Lord forever."  
(Psalm 23:6)

Correspondence address:  
J. H. Kuipers, 632 Balmoral Dr.,  
Oshawa, ON L1J 3A7

## Teachers

AYLMER, Ont.: Immanuel Christian  
School invites candidates to apply for  
a definite opening in our Grade 3/4  
classroom. The ability to teach music  
will be an asset. If you would like to  
become part of a supportive and active  
Christian education community,  
please forward your resume to:

Mrs. Marianne Vangoor  
Immanuel Christian School  
75 Caverly Rd.  
Aylmer, ON N5H 2P6  
phone: 519-773-8476  
fax: 519-773-8315

## Obituary

"For me to live is Christ and to die is  
gain." (Phil 1:21)

Peacefully at the Heart Institute, Ot-  
tawa, on May 6, 1999, in his 80th year.

**ARIE HENDRIKUS VAN MANSUM**  
went home to be with his heavenly  
Father. Beloved husband of Annette  
Van Mansum. Predeceased by his  
first wife, Theodora Van Diggele.  
Children:

Ria & Ralph Euverman - Kanata, Ont.  
Gerry & Hettie Van Mansum -  
Frisco, Tex.

Margaret & Reg Harris - Kanata, Ont.  
Step-children:

Jim & Becky Hanemaayer -  
Thornton, Ill.

Beverly & Fred Roman - Newark, N.J.  
Also loved and cherished by his  
grandchildren and step-grand-  
children.

Funeral Service was held at Calvin  
Christian Reformed Church, Ottawa,  
Ont. on May 10, 1999. Pastor Ken  
Gehrels officiated.

Correspondence address:  
Annette Van Mansum, 716-1485  
Baseline Rd., Ottawa, ON K2C 3L8

## Obituary

With deep sadness and pain, we  
share with you, on April 28, 1999,  
**ALEX HUININK**

at the age of 48, was brought to glory  
through the promise of the gift of  
eternal life.

Beloved husband of Bernice Huinink-  
Grevers.

Chenshad Dad of:

Kevin & Karin  
Julie & Randal Van Rooyen  
Danielle & Dan  
Rachel  
Daryl  
Valerie

Loved son of:

Jozina Huinink  
Dear brother of:

Eef Baartse  
Lenny & Bill Doppenberg  
Bill & Miep Huinink  
Gerry & Minnie Huinink  
Leida & Gerald Dykstra

Deeply loved by nephews and nieces.  
Alex walked in a quiet way, humbly  
serving his Lord and Master. We  
thank and praise God for touching  
each one of us through Alex and re-  
joice as he now continues this service  
to his Lord and Savior in eternity.

## Miscellaneous

First Christian Reformed Church of  
Rocky Mountain House, Alberta is  
compiling a history book for its 50th  
anniversary in the year 2000. Former  
members interested in contributing  
remembrances, please forward them  
to: S. Stark, R.R. 2, Rocky Mountain  
House, AB T0M 1T0.

## Church News

The next meeting of **Classis B.C.  
North-West** will be D.V. on September  
21-22, 1999, in the First Christian  
Reformed Church of Richmond, 6500  
Maple Rd., Richmond, B.C. Any material  
or proposals to be included in  
the agenda need to be in the hands of  
the Stated Clerk, Peter Brouwer, no  
later than July 24, 1999.



JUNE 28, 1999

## Classifieds

Teachers	Teachers	Miscellaneous	Obituaries
<p><b>BRAMPTON, Ont.:</b> John Knox Christian School is inviting applications for an opening in the intermediate level. Specialties in Science and French would be an asset but not absolutely necessary. Please send a resume, including a philosophy of Christian education to:</p> <p><b>Ms. Hilda Roukema</b> John Knox Christian School 82 McLaughlin Rd. S. Brampton, ON L6Y 2C7 phone: 905-451-3236 fax: 905-451-3448</p>	<p><b>OAKVILLE, Ont.:</b> Oakville Christian School requires a part-time (75%) French teacher for September 1999. Please call, or send your letter of application to:</p> <p><b>The Principal</b> Oakville Christian School 112 Third Line Oakville, ON L6L 3Z6 phone: 905-825-1247</p>	<p><b>Planning a trip to the Netherlands?</b></p> <p><b>birwa tours</b></p> <p>is a transportation specialist with unlimited possibilities at your service</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 We can arrange your transportation between Schiphol/ Amsterdam</li> <li>2 We can rent you the newest cars and minivans (up to 9 passengers)</li> <li>3 If you're with a group, we can arrange travel all over Europe in comfortable touring buses, even including hotel and sightseeing arrangements.</li> </ol> <p>Always call, fax or write <b>birwa tours</b>, P.O. Box 82 9104 ZH DAMVOUDE, The Neth. ph: 011-31-511-424114 fax: 011-31-511-424015 In Canada: call Mrs. Henny Huiskamp at 613-393-5256</p>	<p>The Lord took unto Himself on Friday, May 28, 1999, at the age of 91, our dear mother and grandmother, <b>ALEIDA G. BRUS</b> (nee Van Arragon) Beloved wife of the late Gerrit J. Brus (1975). Loving mother of: Gerrit &amp; Ann Brus Ann &amp; Conrad Guichelaar Margaret &amp; Siben Smit Gerda &amp; George Van Dijk Diane &amp; the late Henry De Boer (1989) Alice &amp; Jake Winter Christine &amp; Jim Vreugdenhil Maria &amp; Ken Gittins and many grandchildren &amp; great-grandchildren. Also predeceased by two grandchildren. Funeral service was held at Hope CRC, Brantford, Ont., on June 1, 1999.</p>
<p><b>CHATHAM, Ont.:</b> Chatham Christian High School is seeking applications for a full-time teaching position in Science. Send your resume to:</p> <p><b>Mr. John Van Pelt</b> 90 Park Ave. E. Chatham, ON N7M 3V4 phone: 519-352-4591 fax: 519-352-3476</p>	<p><b>Church News</b></p> <p><b>Classis Chatham</b> of the Christian Reformed Church will meet in regular session D.V. Tuesday, September 14, 1999, in the Woodstock-Maranatha Christian Reformed Church. All materials for the agenda must be in the office of the Stated Clerk by Monday, July 26, 1999.</p> <p>The next meeting of <b>Classis Niagara</b> is planned for Wednesday, September 15, 1999, at 4 p.m. at Covenant CRC in St. Catharines. Agenda items and requests to address Classis should be received by the Stated Clerk before August 4, 1999.</p>	<p><b>Three bedroom townhouse</b> for rent. St. Catharines, Ont. Linwell/Lakeport area. Available Aug. 1, \$685/month. 905-937-0416 or 905-328-4056 Ed or Cora.</p>	<p><b>Wedding Announcement</b></p> <p>Believing it is God's will for our lives, we, <b>CHRISTINA SUZANNE ROMKEMA</b> and <b>DOUGLAS PAUL MACK</b> together with our parents, Allan and Clary Romkema and Paul and Jacqueline Mack are happy to announce our marriage on Saturday, July 10, 1999, at 3:30 p.m. Rehoboth Fellowship Christian Reformed Church, 800 Burnhamthorpe Road, Etobicoke, Ont. Future address: 1212-150 Lakeshore Road West, Mississauga, ON L5H 3R2</p>
<p><b>CHATHAM, Ont.:</b> For those who have recently graduated from a university program with a business/computer degree, there is an excellent opportunity for employment at Chatham Christian High School. This position will require managing the computer network at our new facility as well as some teaching and staff development. There is some flexibility with creating a suitable job description and we are open to full- or part-time employment. Please address inquiries to:</p> <p><b>Mr. John Van Pelt</b> 90 Park Ave. E. Chatham, ON N7M 3V4 phone: 519-352-4591 fax: 519-352-3476</p>	<p><b>Job Opportunities</b></p> <p>Sonshine Community Services in Calgary, Alberta, is seeking qualified applicants for the position of <b>Executive Director</b>.</p> <p>Candidates must have significant previous experience in public relations, fund raising, management and administration. <i>Sonshine Community Services is an umbrella organization for three agencies: Sonshine Centre, Sonshine Counselling Services, Sonshine Family Day Homes.</i> Please fax resumes to the attention of Janice Pasay at 403-266-6016. If you have any questions, please contact Janice Pasay at 403-234-3334.</p>		<p><b>For rent</b></p> <p><b>FOR RENT LONDON, ONT.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 large bedrooms</li> <li>• Freshly painted, new carpets</li> <li>• Full kitchen, full bath</li> <li>• Spacious living room</li> <li>• Close to Fanshawe College</li> <li>• Call Shawn Westerk at 519-457-3385</li> </ul>
<p><b>SASKATOON, Sask.:</b> Saskatoon Christian School is an accredited, independent, interdenominational school. We are accepting resumes for a junior high position to teach language arts, social studies and physical education. Please include with the resume a statement of faith and philosophy of Christian education. Send to:</p> <p><b>Wee Vanstone, Principal</b> 2410 Haultain Ave. Saskatoon, SK S7J 1R3 phone: 306-343-1494 fax: 306-343-0366</p>	<p><b>HAMILTON DISTRICT CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL</b></p> <p><i>Our high school community is grateful to God for the rich blessing of many new Christian parents joining our effort to educate children for service in the Kingdom.</i></p> <p>Qualified teachers who enjoy the company of young adolescents, model a life of commitment to Jesus Christ, appreciate teaching as a craft to be nurtured and are enthusiastic supporters of a Reformed world and life view are encouraged to apply for the following teaching opportunities.</p>	<p><b>FRENCH</b> <b>SMALL ENGINE REPAIR OR ELECTRICITY</b> <b>SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS</b></p> <p>Apply in writing to the Principal, Jim Vanderkooy, preferably by July 1, 1999. Please send your application to: 92 Glancaster Road, Ancaster ON L9G 3K9 or e-mail Jvanderkooy@HDC.org or fax to 905-648-3139.</p>	<p><b>For our Calendar of Events, please turn to page 27.</b></p> <p><b>The MUSIC GROUP offers for the following pre-owned organs:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Domus/Baldwin 4-manual 75-stop digital drawknob with custom to design speaker system for church; right now in home. \$ 49,995.00</li> <li>2) Rodgers 2-manual 40-stop console organ with very large speaker system for church \$ 11,995.00</li> <li>3) Baldwin 2-manual console organ with small speaker system for house or chapel \$ 7,995.00</li> <li>4) Galanti 2-manual 25-stop digital console organ with toe studs and gen. crescendo \$ 9,995.00</li> <li>5) Eminent D 227 2-manual organ/27-pedal \$ 3,995.00</li> <li>6) Hammond Concorde 2-manual organ/27-pedal \$ 2,995.00</li> <li>7) Yamaha D 55 2-manual organ/27-pedal \$ 2,995.00</li> </ol> <p><b>Please contact us at 1-800-376-7199 for more information or visit us at Unit 2 - 5205 Harvester Rd., Burlington, Ont.</b></p>
<p><b>Miscellaneous</b></p> <p><b>GARAGE SALE</b> JULY 10, 1999 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. <b>Rain or Shine</b></p> <p>Christian and secular books, music, videos, large size women's clothes, housewares and assorted miscellaneous.</p> <p>148 Classic Ave. (Off Lincoln St. E., between Wellington and Southworth Sts.) in Welland, Ont.</p>			



## Classifieds

## Job Opportunities

**Music Director/Organist:** Covenant CRC in St. Catharines, Ont. is requesting applications or inquiries for the position of Music Director/Organist for the period of Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, 1999, to fill in for a leave of absence. Please send application or inquiries to: Personnel Committee, Covenant CRC, P.O. Box 20100, St. Catharines, ON L2M 7W7 or call John Vriend at 905-934-7684.

**WOODBIDGE, Ont.:** Toronto District Christian High School invites applications for a possible position as **full-time on site technologist**. The beginning date is negotiable, however it must be some time before September 1999. Please send resume, credentials and statement of faith to:

Ren Siebenga  
c/o Toronto District Christian High School  
377 Woodbridge Ave.  
Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8

Full time position available on 400 **sow farrow & finish** operation. Good house available close to church and Christian school, just outside of **Dresden, Ontario**. If interested, call 519-683-6068.

**Gas Fireplace Installer and/or Apprentice.** Stamford Hardware requires one enthusiastic person to fill this position. Please drop off your resume at the store. Ask for Bert.  
**Stamford Home Hardware**  
3639 Portage Rd.  
Niagara Falls, ON

## For rent

CLINTON, ONTARIO  
ADULT LIFE LEASE  
RESIDENCES

available 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible, sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info, call (519) 233-7296 or (519) 482-7862.

**COZY SUMMER HOME FOR RENT.** Our home is for rent during July and August, Lake Huron, near Samia, Ont. Access to beautiful sandy beach. Fully furnished, linen included, 2 baths, laundry. \$800/wk. Phone/fax 519-899-2522, akkooy@tct.net

**Vacationing in beautiful British Columbia** on a budget? One bedroom suite, centrally located in the **Fraser Valley**, available year round (ski season, too!). For daily, weekly, monthly rates, call 604-856-8183. Mark & Angela Struyk-Huyer, Aldergrove, BC Canada

## Redeemer College

welcomes applications for possible part-time instructor positions in the 1999/2000 academic year to teach the following courses:

- **Art:** Introduction to Studio: 2-D Design
- **French:** Beginner's French - Levels I and II
- **Philosophy:** Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Kant. For more information contact tplanti@redeemer.on.ca
- **Phys-Ed:** Care and Prevention of Injuries, Gymnastics, Physical Health and Fitness, Instructional Methods for Physical Activities
- **Spanish:** Beginner's Spanish: Levels I and II

Also required are **part-time Lab Instructors** in:

- **Chemistry:** Introductory level
- **Environmental Science:** Introductory level

Applicants should possess a Master's degree or a Doctorate, and should be in agreement with the Reformed Christian basis of the college. Deadline: July 1, 1999, or until filled. Direct applications and the names of three references to:

Dr. M. Elaine Botha, Vice-President (Academic), Redeemer College,  
777 Garner Rd. E. (Hwy. 53), Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4. Fax (905) 648-2134; or email: ebotha@redeemer.on.ca.

Applications received within the past year will still be considered.

*Do you love Jesus? We do.*

## Full Time Youth Director

Bethel CRC of Lacombe, Alberta, is seeking a leader (new position) to expand and develop existing youth programs at the junior, senior and post high school levels, to nurture a love for Jesus and a desire to serve him among our youth.

Please direct inquiries and resumes to

**Bethel Christian Reformed Church**

c/o Jack Oudman, 5704 51 Ave.

Lacombe, AB T4L 1K8

phone 403-782-2667 fax 403-782-2542

The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) has a full-time opening for an

## ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

in **World Missions - Canada**. The qualified individual must have demonstrated ability to handle administrative functions while possessing working knowledge of the Christian Reformed Church and its agencies. The primary responsibility is to provide administrative support and office management for the director and staff of World Missions - Canada.

High school diploma and/or at least two years of professional experience in an office environment with demonstrated ability in word processing, preferably using Windows 95.

A detailed job description is available upon request. For consideration, submit a copy of your resume or application by **July 15, 1999**.

Director of Personnel

Christian Reformed Church in North America

P.O. Box 5070 phone: 905-336-2920

3475 Mainway fax: 905-336-8344

Burlington, Ontario L7R 3Y8 e-mail: colemann@crcna.org

**First Christian Reformed Church of Thunder Bay, Ontario, is inviting applications for a**

## Director of Ministries

**with the main emphasis on Youth and Evangelism.**

The successful candidate must be committed to the Reformed faith, biblical inerrancy, 6 day creation, male headship and covenantal theology.

Please send your resume to:

Search Committee, c/o Mrs. Faye Dykstra

2570 Veradale Street

Thunder Bay, ON P7K 1B7

For more information call

Mr. Allan Streutker at 807-939-1691.

**Hope Fellowship Christian Reformed Church, located in Oshawa, Ontario, is seeking a**

## Youth Pastor

We are a newly formed congregation, resulting from a multiplication of Zion Christian Reformed Church in Oshawa. Hope Fellowship has 220 youth under 19 years of age and we are also committed to evangelism among community youth.

Therefore this position is a full time position requiring someone in love with Jesus Christ and His cause, well trained and deeply committed to reaching young people. The Youth Pastor will be a member of a creative, highly supportive, multi-staff, accountable to the Council and supervised by the Senior Pastor.

Responsibilities include: developing meaningful relationships with youth, providing training for leaders; organizing and leading discipleship groups, social events, service projects, etc.

Interested, qualified candidates please forward your resume to:

Simon Muizelaar, 23 Timberland Ct.,

Courtice, ON, Canada L1E 2H1

phone: 905-579-5434, fax: 905-571-1554

or e-mail: muizelaar@direct.com

## THE SEAFARERS CENTRE

201, rue de la Commune Ouest  
Montréal, Québec, Canada H2Y 2C9

THE CRC SEAWAY MINISTRY IN MONTRÉAL, A CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY OUTREACH TO INTERNATIONAL SEAFARERS, NEEDS YOU.

## VOLUNTEERS.

We need **volunteers** to help us keep the Centre running smoothly during the late spring, summer and fall. We will supply you with a furnished apartment. To request a stay of 1-4 weeks, please contact one of the numbers below.

## HOST COUPLE.

We also need a **host couple**. This salaried position, which involves working with international seafarers in presenting the gospel through hospitality, requires a mature couple who would make Montréal their home for 1 or 2 years. For further information, please contact one of the numbers below.

phone: 514-844-1476 fax: 514-844-1472  
e-mail: <seafarer@ietc.ca> attention: Karin



## Events/Classifieds

## Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per line inch, per insertion.

- July 1 Frisian Picnic, 11 a.m. at Pinehurst Conservation Park, Hwy. 24A, 4 miles north of Paris, Ont. (#)
- July 2-4 The Promise, musical pageant on The Life of Christ, at The Forest Amphitheatre, Forest, Ont. 8:30 p.m. Gates open at 7:30 p.m. Admission: Adults \$10, Elementary students \$5, preschoolers free. Cancelled if weather is poor. 1-800-265-0316 for more info.
- July 9-11 The Promise, Forest, Ont. See listing for July 2-4 for more info.
- July 14 De Hollandse Dag, om 10 uur in de Caradoc Community Centre, Mount Brydges, Ont. Spreker: Ds. H. Van Essen. Breng uw eigen lunch en koffiekop. (#)
- July 17 Wieringermeer Picnic - Queens Park, Stratford, Ont., 10 a.m. (#)
- July 25 Dutch Service, Rev. Jacob Kuntz, Ancaster CRC, Hwy. 53, Ancaster, Ont., 3 p.m. (#)

## SALES SUBCONTRACTORS

Canadian firm seeks Program Coordinators to market its public relations programs in western and central Canada. Income 30-50K+. Appreciate Christian morals and principals. Sales experience helpful but not necessary. Training provided. Call for qualifying telephone interview on Mondays a.m.: President, Community Service Systems, 613-258-7730.

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## HALF TIME YOUTH &amp; EDUCATION COORDINATOR POSITION

Active youth ministry looking for strong leadership for church's youth programs. Congregation seeking direction for young people: strong relationship with Jesus Christ a necessity; musical appreciation and ability would be an asset.

We are an urban congregation of 135 families characterized as a loving church family which has recently implemented a small group ministry. If you see yourself meeting our needs and have academic qualifications and/or experience, please contact us.

Send your profile to  
Grace CRC  
255 Tweedsmuir Ave. W.,  
P.O. Box 337  
Chatham, ON N7M 5K4

For a church profile or if you have any questions contact us by phone 519-436-1558, fax 519-436-1558, or e-mail: grace@ciaccess.com



## The Living Word

Sermons for reading services.

Contact:

R. Vander Ploeg Secr./Treas.  
37 Brick Pond Lane  
Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1  
Phone: (519) 539-2117

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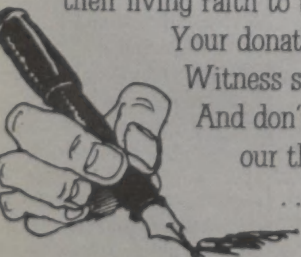
## Christian Courier

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De Hollandse Dag in Mount Brydges, Ontario wordt gehouden op Woensdag, 14 juli 1999, om 10 uur in de Caradoc Community Centre in Mount Brydges, Ont.

Spreker:

Ds. H. Van Essen



Koffie en koek  
om half tien.  
Breng uw eigen lunch  
en koffiekop.

## FRISIAN PICNIC

Thursday, July 1, 1999  
starting at 11 a.m.

Pinehurst Conservation Park  
Paris, Ontario  
(on Highway 24A, 4 miles north of Paris)



Hope to see you there!

## Bert Witvoet Retirement Roast Tonight

Saturday, July 17, 1999, 7:30 p.m.

Jubilee Fellowship CRC, 13 Wilholme Dr.

St. Catharines, Ontario

All guests must be on RSVP list.



I'm here for the Witvoet Roast.  
Give me a seat near the  
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## News

# Allegations of infanticide at Calgary hospital spark debate

Stephen VanHelden

CALGARY, Alta. (City Light News) — Allegations that infanticide has occurred at the Foothills Hospital in Calgary have sparked a raging debate which has divided the medical community, incited an investigation by city police and questioned what defines lethal abnormalities.

Spearheaded by a complaint in a letter from Reform MP Jason Kenney, Calgary police have begun an investigation involving an allegation that a baby with "lethal abnormalities" was deprived of food and water last August at Foothills Hospital. The baby wasn't wanted by the mother and eventually died.

"We received a letter that was alleging violations of the Criminal Code, and that is what we are investigating," said Deputy Police Chief Rick Hanson. "Until the investigation is done we can't tell you what the breeches are, if there are any."

When asked about allegations of a child not being fed or given water, Shirley Popadiuk, public affairs manager for acute care said, "That's an allegation. It's going to be investigated. But from the information I have been provided with and from what we said at the news conference, it's very rare that a situation like this would occur."

## What is lethal?

According to a statement by the Calgary Regional Health Authority (CRHA), "induction of labor for infants with a lethal abnormal-



ity" occurs when labor is medically induced because the babies are diagnosed with serious abnormalities, which could be no brain, no kidneys or lungs. And the College of Physicians and Surgeons guidelines indicates that such children are not expected to live. "These are congenital abnormalities, [which] are lethal, and the fetus would not survive," said Popadiuk.

A Calgary family physician has raised critical concerns over what constitutes "lethal abnormalities." Dr. Christin Hilbert, president of the local chapter of the Christian Medical Dental Society, said there is an impression in the media that there is unanimity on what is lethal, but this is not the case.

"Sometimes in the press it

sounds like lethal is a lethal thing and everybody would agree that (the infant) should be terminated," she said. Hilbert says that is something that should be reconsidered. While not wanting to get into details at this time, Hilbert said, "certainly the threshold has been getting quite low on what is considered dangerous."

Hilbert also suggested that a doctor's ethical position might influence what he or she may tell a mother. "Sometimes you wonder about the bias of the information giver, his or her ethical position will slant the information given to the mother. And that can work either way. It comes with their package of beliefs," she said.

Kenney, who represents Calgary Southeast, challenged the

competency of doctors in their diagnoses of children who are said to have lethal abnormalities. He referred to mother Amber Vytar who accompanied him to the press conference outside of Foothills hospital on Friday May 7.

## Wrong diagnosis

"One child was diagnosed with a lethal abnormality and her mother was advised to undergo this genetic termination procedure. And now because she insisted on carrying it to term she has a healthy, happy 15-year-old boy," he said.

A statement by the CHRA says a multidisciplinary team of specialists meets with the patient when "a major problem is detected through ultrasound at 18-weeks gestation." A patient is then referred to the developmental clinic at the Foothills Medical Centre. The specialists included are from medical genetics, radiology, social work, nursing and other disciplines.

Referring to the CHRA statement, Popadiuk said, "If it does happen, palliative care is provided — fluids, comfort, warmth, in some cases oxygen — and different medical care is provided depending on what is appropriate for the situation. That's the hospital policy to provide that."

## Playing God

A former nurse and concerned citizen balked at statements she had heard in the press that these children are receiving compassionate care. Carol Tholenaer went to the press conference last week and bluntly said, "That isn't compassionate care."

"Medically induced terminations" is the correct term," she added, "not genetic terminations. These are when congenital abnormalities are detected that are lethal and the fetus would not survive."

Larry Heather, president of Christian Concern for Life says that what is happening at the Foothills Hospital is infanticide, and it's not right when people play God. "When we accept abortion as a viable option, we open a Pandora's Box for all kinds of abuses."

Heather says some of the brightest people are those with physical defects, and wanting the perfect baby is wrong. "It's a rebellion against the limitation God allows in everyone's life," he said. Citing facts such as ruling abortion legal, he called the Supreme Court the "architect of these atrocities."

## News Digest

### U.S. Army permits witchcraft

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — The U.S. Army is facilitating the practice of Wicca, a neo-pagan form of witchcraft, on military bases, according to a report in the *Austin American-Statesman*.

The newspaper reported that Fort Hood, the largest U.S. Army base, is also the centre of Wiccan practice in the military. Three years ago, Wicca was recognized by the Department of Defense as a legitimate religion, deserving the same status as Christianity, Judaism or Islam. A spokesperson for the military chaplaincy program said the Army is obligated to make provisions for the religious needs of its members without passing judgment on their beliefs.

At least 20 witches, and perhaps as many as 100, reportedly take part in covens at Fort Hood.

Wiccans do not require a chapel. Instead, they hold festivals around a burning bonfire, with special observances during the vernal and autumnal equinox. Wiccans insist that they do not worship Satan or participate in human or animal sacrifice.

### Experts in error

OHIO — Experts are wrong surprisingly often and they frequently deny it, according to Philip Tetlock, a professor of psychology at Ohio State University. He has collected 5,000 predictions from more than 200 experts over the past 12 years, reports the *Globe and Mail*. In every scenario in which a prediction could be tested for accuracy, barely half the experts correctly foresaw the events that occurred, and only one in four of them showed "a substantial willingness to admit their error." Furthermore, he wrote in the *American Journal of Political Science*, those experts who said they were very sure of their predictions were right only 45 per cent of the time.

### Ban dogs singer

EGYPT — Lebanese singer Najwa Karam has returned to Egypt after officials lifted a ban barring her from the country imposed in April in the belief that she had named her dog after Islam's prophet Mohammed, reports the *Toronto Star*. Karam denied the accusation. Muslims consider dogs unclean, and to insult the prophet in such a way is considered blasphemous.

## Mennonites sing for peace in Balkans

OTTAWA, Ont. (Canadian Mennonite) — Canadian MPs were startled to hear some 500 people singing on Parliament Hill on May 13. The gathered crowd, representing Mennonite churches from across Ontario, assembled to sing and pray for peace in the Balkans.

The singing demonstration attracted people from as far as Leamington, Niagara and Kitchener-Waterloo. The choir ranged from infants to great-grandmothers. Teenagers stood beside senior citizens, all united by a common faith, all wanting to be a witness to the world and to their national leaders; they do not support violence by anyone in the Balkans.

The idea for a musical rally rose spontaneously after Darrel Toews, pastor of Tavistock (Ont.) Mennonite Church, preached a Sunday

sermon about the power of music to shape both communities and the world.

One Member of Parliament confessed that she was "stunned" by the 500-voice choir singing for peace. About six parliamentarians came out to talk to the Mennonite group. Lynn Myers, MP from Waterloo-Wellington, had sent a letter to all MPs announcing the event.

A reporter from the *Toronto Sun* asked what religion the group was and why there were so many young people. She said she had never seen anything like this before. Another person said he had discovered that Mennonite gatherings were considered "low risk" for violence.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) personnel in Kitchener and

Ottawa helped arrange the logistics of the trip and prepared a special letter to federal leaders. Leonard Enns and Roy Lichti conducted the hymns.

"We do not claim to understand all of the intricacies of international diplomacy, nor of the history of this conflict," stated the letter, read aloud at the event. "Nonetheless, Mennonites do have experience to draw upon... in the Balkans specifically. This experience has shown us that lasting peace and justice cannot be achieved through violent force... We urge the government of Canada to press for an end to the bombing and for a peaceful and just resolution of this conflict. It is to this end that we direct our songs and our prayers today."